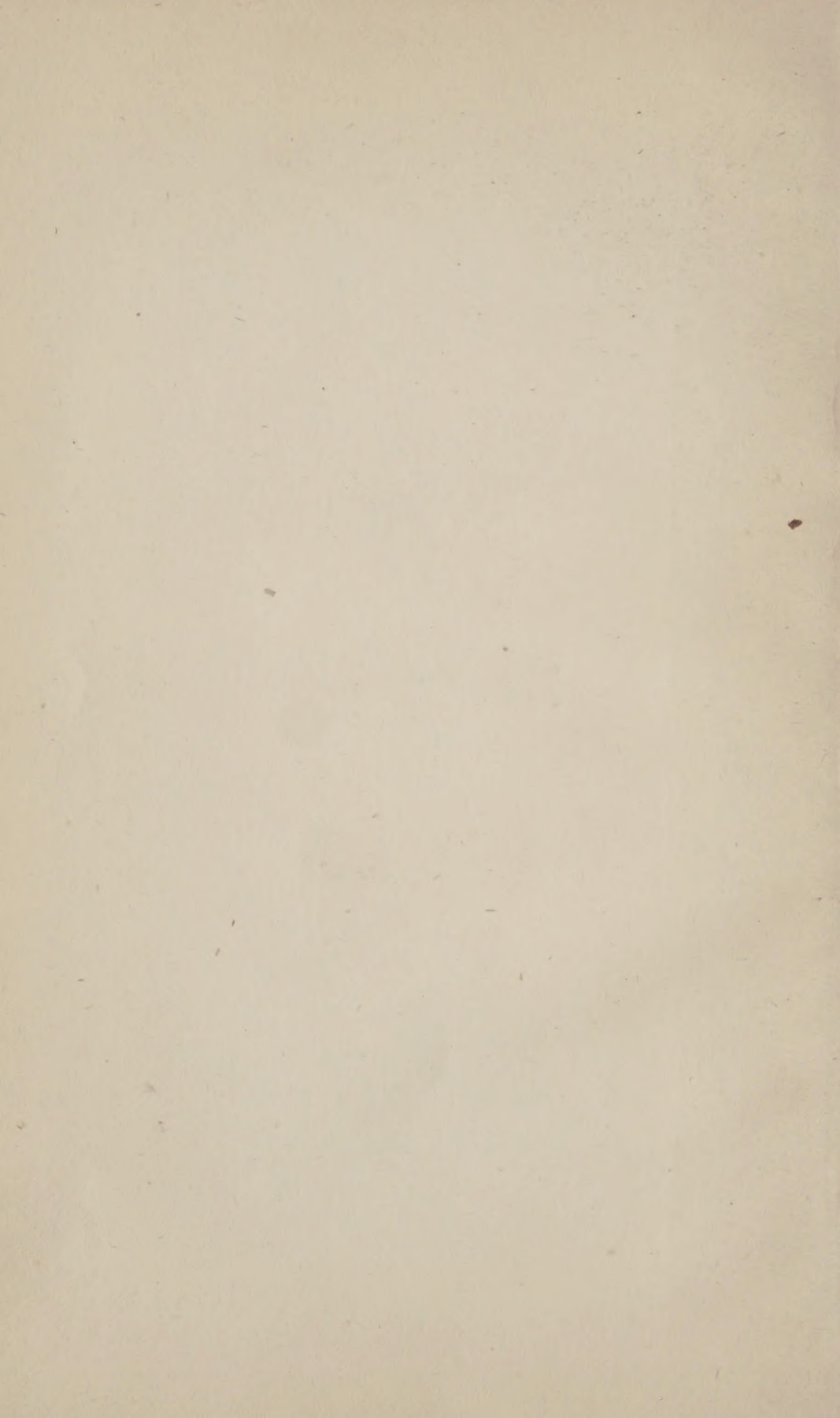


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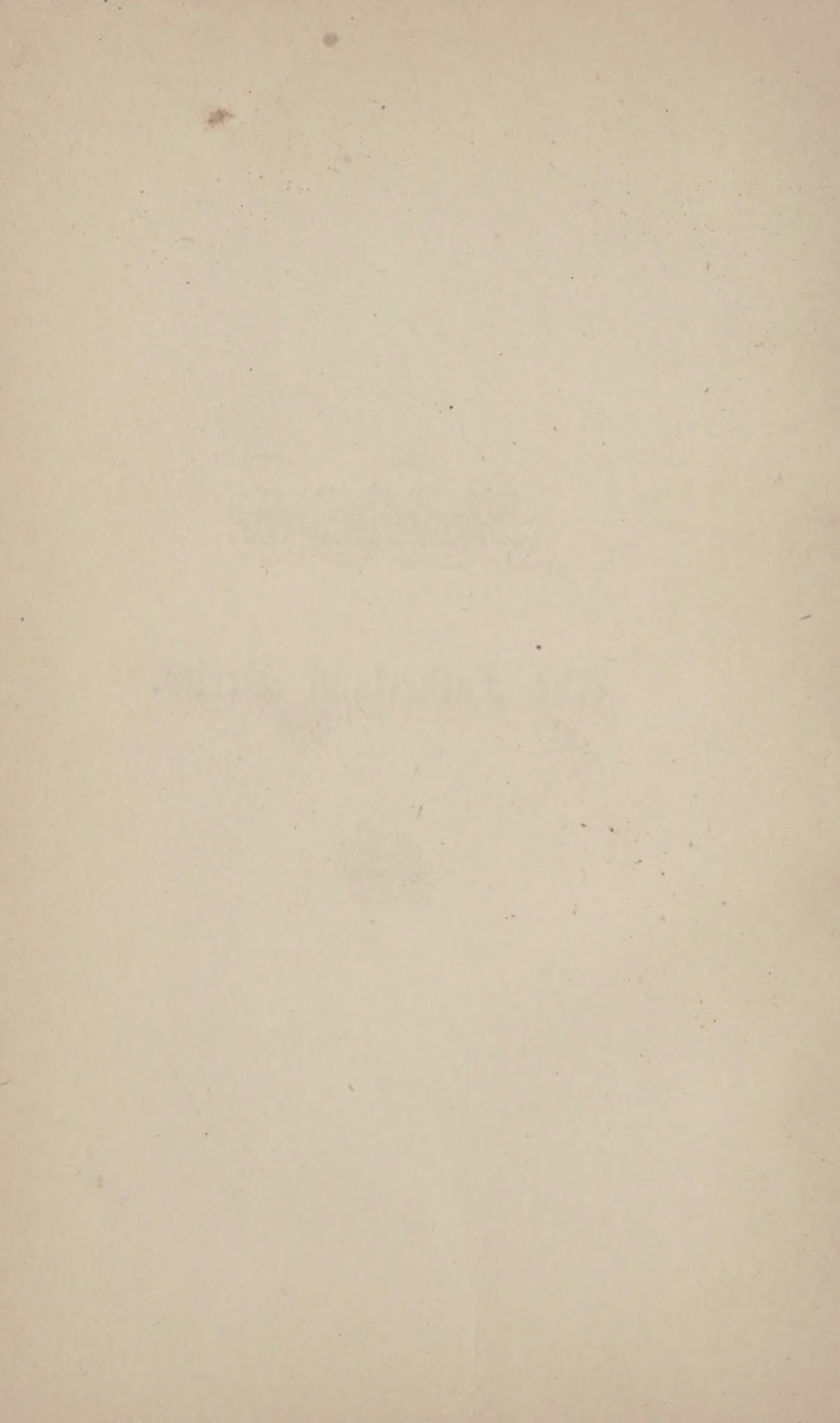






The Fatherland Series.









The Fatherland Series.

Under the Snow.



From the German.

PHILADELPHIA:

LUTHERAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

1870.

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Buried in the Snow.

BY

FRANZ HOFFMANN.

Translated from the German,

BY

MRS. M. A. MANDERSON.



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BURIED IN THE SNOW.

CHAPTER I.

THE JURA.

TO many of my readers the following narrative may perhaps appear improbable, if not altogether impossible; and yet the incidents I shall relate in these pages, in their main points actually occurred. Those who have visited the Jura Mountains, who from experience know the wild and inhospitable aspect its heights assume during the winter, and have encountered one of its terrific storms of snow, will not for a moment doubt the truth of my story, remarkable

though it may be. These storms are, at times, of such fearful and appalling fierceness as the dwellers in plain and valley cannot appreciate. In Alpine language they are called *tourmentes*, and truly they deserve the name.

The Jura is a range of mountains of a peculiar limestone formation, extending from the angle formed by the Rhone and the Ain, in a north-easterly direction, for more than four hundred and fifty miles, to the upper part of the source of the Main. The Rhone, breaking through it between Schaffhausen and Basle, divides it into two parts, the Swiss or French, and the German Jura: its loftiest peaks are the Pré des Marmiers, the Reculet, and the Grand-Colombier, all of which are between five and six thousand feet in height. Between these and other mighty summits lie rocky ravines, and countless valleys, varying in their degree of

richness and fertility. The higher the summits of these mountains the more sterile and desolate is the region, the more bitter and severe the cold, and the shorter the summer.

Upon some of the highest peaks the snow remains the entire year. The Jura, during the warm season, possesses a rapid and vigorous vegetation, which preserves its freshness and beauty until the snow spreads its white pall over meadow and glen. The valleys and mountain-sides are clothed with forests of oak, beech, and pine, while above lie green meadows, where the "slopes of short grass, interspersed with wild thyme and delicate, small flowers," afford grazing for large herds of cattle. This beautiful season lasts only about five months in the year, beginning with the last of May, and ending with the first days of October; when Winter, with stern, savage grandeur, and rough,

unrelenting hand, commences his cheerless reign.

It is truly a delightful time for the poor mountaineer, when, after the long, dreary season, the gentle southern breezes again move over the mountains, melting with soft, mild breath the snow upon the summits and declivities, causing thousands of brooks and streams to rush swiftly and rejoicingly down the rocky walls into the valley below. Gradually the fresh verdure of spring sprouts from the bosom of the earth; then does the herdsman, with joy, open his stall, and release his long-prisoned cows and goats, which appear to inhale with delight the fresh, fragrant air; and he leads them cheerfully lowing and bleating out of the valleys, upon the broad upland pastures, where in luxuriant fulness grows the rich, sweet food. The wise creatures patiently mount the steep, rough mountain-path, well know-

ing the pleasure in reserve for them after the toil.

The day of the departure is a holiday for all the dwellers of the valleys, even though to the herdsman it is a period of banishment from the comforts of home, and a separation from wife and children. Upon the alma await him no leisure hours; the summer is not for him a time of recreation and indolence; he must labor hard, and endure many and severe privations: his nourishment consists almost entirely of a milk diet, varied occasionally with potatoes; his occupation, of tending his herd, and the making of those famous Gruyère cheeses, and others of an inferior kind: these are prepared with exceeding labor and care, and with the most scrupulous cleanliness. Every herdsman has up in the mountain his chalet, which serves him at the same time for a dwelling and a dairy. These chalets are constructed firmly

and substantially of stone, roofed with small planks of pine: heavy stones are laid in rows upon them, to protect them from being torn away by the violent storms to which these regions are subject. The interior of these chalets are divided into three apartments: the well-enclosed stable, where the cattle are lodged at night; a dairy, furnished with its clean, broad wooden bowls; and a kitchen, which serves the poor herdsman at the same time as a sleeping apartment, his couch generally being a bed of straw. In the kitchen is an enormous chimney, in which hangs a great caldron, used for heating the milk and converting it into cheese.

The period of their sojourn is generally the entire summer, during which time they seldom see any one except an occasional traveller, to whom they extend heartily such hospitality as it is in their power to bestow, refreshing him with a drink of their cool,

sweet milk, or providing a resting-place after his arduous ascent. Notwithstanding all the deprivations to which this life is subject, the laborious work, and isolation from human companionship, the herdsmen not only submit patiently to their lot, but they love, and cling almost with veneration to this ancient custom of their fathers: no toil, no privation could induce them to forego this solitary mountain sojourn.

The season ends with the 9th of October, St. Denis's Day: then the herdsman descends from the mountain, and the day of his return to his family is celebrated as a holiday—a more joyous one than the day of his departure. And now a new life commences with the early autumn: the poor villagers are unable to lead an idle life, but industriously use every moment when not otherwise employed, in carving all kinds of household utensils and fancy articles out of wood,

which they dispose of, not only in the large towns in their immediate neighborhood, and to tourists, but which are also exported in large quantities to all parts of the world: some of these carvings are of exquisite workmanship, and form the chief winter occupation of the villagers, and sometimes almost their sole resource.

While the adults are thus industriously employed, the children are not suffered to pass their days in idleness. Among these simple mountaineers, there is considerable intelligence; in some of the cantons reading is universal; "it is penal for a father to allow his child to grow up without education, and inspectors go round from time to time to ascertain if the children can read and write." Schools abound, but sometimes the cottages of the villagers are so widely separated, that during the heavy snow-storms it is impossible for the children to go to school, and at

such times they are obliged to study their lessons at home. It is rare to find a child twelve years old who cannot both read and write. Their long winter evenings are shortened and cheered by the reading aloud of some pleasant, instructive book by one of the elder children, while the rest of the family carry on their various employments. These books are obtained, generally, from the pastor, or from the school-master of the village; and never, perhaps, is reading listened to more intently, or does it excite such deep interest, as in these lowly chalets, when the little family surround the great, rough oaken table, and, by the glimmer of the solitary lamp, ply their busy fingers. After the reading, follows, generally, a pleasant talk over the contents of the book just read, the parents embracing this opportunity for conveying counsel and instruction: many a godly and beautiful lecture, full of

deep and vital piety, is delivered by the father of the household. Then, also, amusements of various kinds are devised by the parents, and entered into with great zest by the children, bringing merriment and enjoyment, and but seldom rudeness or disturbance. The habits and customs of these secluded villagers are innocent and healthful; their life of deprivation and hardship gives them power of endurance in the hardest situations of life, while their purity and unswerving devotion to their faith is now, as it has ever been, their most marked characteristic.

The fastnesses of these mountains "have served as a retreat for the truth, when nearly the whole world was shrouded in darkness; the blood of many martyrs has bedewed its rocks," and its deep caverns have resounded with songs of praise: these memories tend still to elevate the souls of these simple mountaineers, and inspire them with con-

tinually renewed zeal in the maintenance and preservation of their most holy faith.

“Free as the chamois on their mountain’s side,
Firm as the rocks which hem their valley in,
They keep the faith for which their fathers fought:
They fear their God, nor fear they aught beside.”





CHAPTER II.

JACQUES.

IN the most secluded and inaccessible valley of the Jura Mountains, there lay a quaint, straggling village, in one of whose lowly chalets lived the hero of this true story. The family was not large, consisting only of the father and grandfather of Jacques Lopraz, a lad of some thirteen years, himself, and his two younger sisters. Their life did not vary from that of the rest of the dwellers in the valley: in the summer the father ascended with his little herd to the upland pastures, with their swelling mounds of verdure, tending his cattle throughout the long, lonely days, and preparing the great cheeses, with which treasures he returned to

his sheltered home early in the autumn, when the rough wind made known that stern Winter, with his fearful storms, and masses of snow, drew nigh.

For many years, until God called her to himself, did the mother of this little household, while the father tended his herd upon the mountain height, labor industriously in the little chalet and garden, and bring up her children in the fear of God; but now, these duties devolved upon the aged, white-haired sire of François Lopraz: in his spare moments the old man labored to increase the scanty store of the household by carving plates and spoons, or such articles as required but little delicacy of sight or touch. In his youth he had been one of the most skilful wood-carvers in all the valley.

During the winter, the little family would gather in the neat, cosy room, and as father and grandfather carved patiently and dili-

gently with knife and chisel, the mother industriously plied the humming spinning-wheel, while the little ones sat with book and slate Jacques meanwhile rendering them assistance, until, their tasks being ended, they read aloud, in turn, from some entertaining or instructive book, to which the serious parents listened attentively, as well as the merry children; and many a good and pious lesson did the venerable grandsire weave into the quiet, pleasant evenings, which influenced in after days the lives of these little ones. In such employments and pleasures, the long winter evenings would pass away so quickly that all would look up in astonishment when the cuckoo in the old house-clock called, with clear, shrill notes, the hour of rest.

For many years the little family had led this life, each summer and each winter bringing similar occupations and pleasures,

no change ever varying its monotony, until the event which I shall now record in these pages took place.

The mild summer had taken leave of the valleys of the Jura, St. Denis's Day was over, the herds with their keepers had come down from the mountain, and yet Jacques's father had not made his appearance. Day after day passed, and they listened in vain for the cheerful bleating of the goats and lowing of the cows, with which they always greeted the well-remembered stall—many times had Jacques and his sisters sought the hill from whose summit they could see far in the distance, but never did their anxious gaze discover aught of the stalwart form of their father, the brown cows, or the sportive goats.

“What could possibly detain him?” This question was asked again and again, until, at length, their troubled, anxious hearts sug-

gested: "Perchance, some misfortune has befallen him!"

And now, Jacques, in alarm, inquired among the neighboring herdsman, but could receive no satisfactory information, although none saw cause for uneasiness; comforting him with the suggestion that perhaps he had remained a little later upon the mountain, so as to gather more hay for the winter. "Nothing can happen to him upon the heights," said they, kindly; "wait a few days longer, and he will certainly return!"

Patiently they waited, and yet he came not; at length, the old grandfather, who, until now, had been the most tranquil, and had exhorted the rest to composure, began to feel no little solicitude.

"This suspense has lasted too long," said he, one morning, as Jacques returned from the hill, after another vain search for herd and herdsman. "I will myself ascend to

the alma, and find out what is the matter with François. To be sure, I have not attempted the ascent for two years, but it will not be impossible for me to accomplish it. Yes, I will go, my son, and be glad to refresh my old eyes with a glimpse of the dear chalet once more: who knows whether I will feel able to visit it next summer? Would you not like to go with me, Jacques, and surprise your father?"

"Indeed I would, grandfather," answered the boy, without hesitation, and with sparkling eyes. "I have longed to mention it, and only refrained from asking, for fear of a refusal. But, to go together, that will be pleasant indeed."

The preparations for the journey were soon made; the sky was beautifully clear, the air pure and calm, as they left their sheltered, peaceful valley, and, with slow and labored step, mounted the steep, rough path—now

along a narrow gorge, anon skirting the brink of some yawning gulf, ever surrounded by danger, which required their utmost caution and circumspection to avoid. Unfortunately, the lad for a moment forgot his prudence, and thoughtlessly advanced to the very brink of a steep precipice: it was about a quarter of a league's distance from the chalet: his grandfather, alarmed at his daring, sprang forward to pull him back; in his anxiety and haste, he stumbled upon a large, loose stone, and falling, sprained his foot so severely, that it was some time before he recovered sufficiently to proceed. Jacques, full of fright at the accident, hastened to his grandfather, and assisted him to rise: while tenderly supporting him, the repentant lad begged forgiveness for his thoughtlessness. Hoping that no bad consequences would ensue, they again set out, and the old man was enabled, by the help of his stout alpenstock, and by

leaning upon the shoulder of his grandson, to reach the chalet.

They were no little rejoiced when they saw Jacques's father, in good health, and, even at the moment they drew near, engaged in preparations for his departure: had they waited one day longer, his arrival would have ended their suspense, and spared them the trouble of the steep, arduous ascent.

François was no less astonished at the unexpected visit. "Father! Jacques!" cried he, as he saw them approach, "you surely must have feared that some accident had happened me upon the mountain."

"We certainly did," replied the old man; "and not without some foundation, François, for St. Denis's Day is long past, and all the rest of our herdsmen have returned to the valley. What has detained you so long, my son?"

"One of the cows was sick, father, and I

could not leave the poor creature suffering," answered François. "But now she is recovered, and to-day Pierre is to set off with the cheeses, and I will take the herd down to-morrow."

"Then our visit was quite unnecessary," said the old man; "however, that is of no consequence, if only falling weather come not to-night: the wind has changed during the last half-hour, and the look of the sky does not reassure me. Are you very tired, Jacques?"

The lad hesitated, for he perceived a peculiar significance in the question.

"I was thinking," continued he, as Jacques confusedly bent his eyes to the ground—"I was thinking it would be the most prudent course to send the boy on with Pierre, in case it should rain or snow to-morrow. What think you, François?"

The herdsman cast a scrutinizing glance

toward the remote mountain-tops, and with some solicitude expressed the same fear.

"You are right, father," said he; "the sky looks threatening, and all signs indicate a sudden change of the weather. I have been so busy with my preparations, that I have not observed it until now. You had much better return with Pierre, Jacques."

"I will accompany them," added the grandfather; "it will require considerable exertion for me to do so, but I think it will be best; it will be necessary for me to rest a short time, however, before I start."

But the weak old man had already overtasked his strength: in an hour's time, the pain in his injured foot had increased considerably, and he was obliged, not without a painful struggle, to acknowledge that he was unable to make the attempt. He insisted, however, that Jacques should go without him; but the boy was unwilling to leave his

grandfather, and it was at last resolved that they would remain during that night in the chalet, and all go down together, the next morning, into the valley.

Small as the chalet was, there was room for all. François prepared a frugal evening meal, of maize, flour, and milk, in the boiler which hung in the enormous chimney: this, together with butter and cheese, they partook of, with appetites sharpened by their tiresome ascent. Supper over, the wearied boy, after a short but earnest thanksgiving to God for the care and protection of the past day, threw himself down upon the straw bed, in a corner of the chalet, and was soon fast asleep; while his father and grandfather conversed in an undertone for a long time, relating to each other all that had occurred of interest during the past summer, down in the valley, and above upon the mountain-top. At length, they too laid themselves down in

peace, and slept until the eye of morning peeped in at the window of the little chalet.

Upon looking out, they were disappointed and alarmed, although not altogether surprised, to see the mountain covered with snow, and the white flakes still falling fast, which violent gusts of wind whirled in thick eddies past the chalet.

"Should this storm not soon abate, François," said the old man, with much solicitude, "it will be impossible to reach our home in the valley: every path will be choked up by the snow."

"It may not last, father," replied his son; "it is yet early in the season; at all events we will be obliged to wait, for in this storm of wind and snow, you, at least, must not leave the chalet."

"Do not trouble yourself about me, my son, but do you and Jacques leave before the snow is deeper. My lame foot has swol-

len so much more, and pains me to such an extent, that I fear I shall be obliged to remain here several days longer. You go, my children, go while there is still time. The herd must be placed in safety; to-day, François, you may take them down without danger, while to-morrow may prove too late. Do not give yourself any uneasiness about me."

"No! oh, no, father, I could not leave you alone, sick and helpless," replied his son. "Why can we not all go together? My shoulders are strong enough to carry you, father, and Jacques can drive the herd: in this way, with the help of the dear God, we will reach the valley without accident."

But the old man persisted in his resolution. "You know not what you promise, my son," said he. "In such weather it will be almost impossible to hold the cattle together; how then, if you should be burdened with one so helpless as I. Think of your boy, François.

Delay not, but place the herd and Jacques in security, while it lies within your power; and then, to-morrow, you and some of our neighbors can return and care for me."

François was still irresolute: the storm without, howled and raved furiously, driving before it fresh clouds of snow, which shortly would render the descent impracticable. Upon the preservation of his herd depended the maintenance of his family: a speedy abatement of the storm could not be counted upon. It was truly a sad and painful position: on one side, the loss of his sole possessions; on the other, the desertion, if only for a day, of his helpless father, upon this rough, inhospitable height: he could not leave him. Again he insisted that the old man should trust himself to his strong shoulders; but no persuasions could tempt him to expose his son and grandson to danger, by becoming a burden to them.

In these friendly altercations passed several hours of the day, when Jacques made a proposal which brought them to a decision.

“Let me remain with grandfather, in the chalet, and you, father, take the herd down the mountain; you will reach home much sooner than with either of us, and then you can come back with our neighbors for us; grandfather will not be so lonely, and I can wait upon him: it was through my thoughtlessness that this misfortune has come upon us, and now I have an opportunity of showing him that I am truly sorry, and can thus prove my love for him. Go, father, go: why do you hesitate? ‘God, even our own God, will be with us.’”

“The child is right, François; his plan is the wisest and best: the snow is already so deep, and the wind so fearful, that I fear the danger would be greater, did he accompany

you, than were he to remain with me in the chalet. Go, my son, delay no longer: take with you my stick; it is strong, and the iron point is new and firm; it will help you down, as it has helped me up; leave with us one goat and the provisions which remain. I feel more anxiety about you, than about Jacques and myself."

For some moments François stood silent and undecided, until at length, feeling convinced that further opposition would only increase the evil, he determined, hard though it was, to leave his dear ones in the lonely, yet at least sheltered chalet.

"So be it, then," said he, while he tearfully embraced the brave old man. "We have lost one opportunity, by not going down with Pierre, and I must endeavor to remedy the neglect if possible. I will at once, upon my descent, summon the neighbors, and with their aid, and the blessing of the good God,

will rescue you right speedily from your perilous situation."

"God help you, my son," replied the aged man, with a sweet expression of quiet repose.

"Go in peace, my son, and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

François had turned to leave the chalet, but hastily drawing from his pocket a small flask, covered with fine wicker-work, and half-filled with wine, he handed it to his father, saying:

"Take this, father; the dear mother gave it to me last summer, when I came up the mountain. I need it not, and it may perhaps prove of service to you: take it as a gift from the sainted one. And now—farewell!"

For the last time he embraced his father, then hastened to drive the herd out of the stable, Jacques following to render him assistance. The cattle appeared to be surprised when they found the ground covered with

snow: they stood for a moment dismayed and confused, but the well-known call of the herdsman soon brought them in motion, and knowing they were going home, they sportively ran hither and thither around the little chalet, causing him some trouble in bringing them together again; that accomplished, the father once more kissed his boy and pressed him tenderly to his heart.

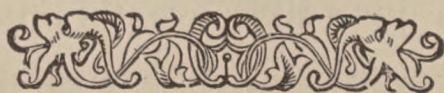
“God protect you both. Watch over thy grandfather as carefully and lovingly as thou canst, and be not too solicitous about the future: if God grant that I reach our home in safety, thou wilt, in a few days at farthest, be relieved: be patient, courageous, and hopeful, my son; God have thee in his gracious keeping.”

“And you too, father,” sobbed the boy, while he broke out into tears, and pressed a farewell kiss upon his parent’s lips.

François gently withdrew himself from

the child's embrace, and herd and herdsman disappeared amid the whirling clouds of snow. Jacques sought in vain to penetrate the thick, flaky veil; a last call of farewell reached his listening ear, faintly, above the wild howlings of the tempest, and now every trace of his father had disappeared, and the boy stood alone, upon the bleak, desolate mountain summit, swaying in the howling blast, and his tender form enveloped in a soft, white garment of snow.

"God protect you, father," whispered the lad, "you and us. Ah! would we dare follow." One imploring look he cast toward the dark, shrouded heavens; then, with a powerful effort repressing his painful emotions, he entered the chalet, and busied himself with the tenderest care for his loved and helpless grandfather.





CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST DAY IN THE CHALET.

AS Jacques entered, he saw the old man standing beside the window, from which he had been gazing after his son. He leaned his venerable, gray head upon the sill, while with folded hands, and with eyes raised to heaven, his lips moved as though engaged in prayer. Jacques's tears broke forth afresh at the sorrowful, touching sight: sinking at his grandfather's feet, he pressed his hot lips upon the dear hands. "He has gone, grandfather," said he, "and God alone knows if we shall ever see him again!"

"We can pray for him, my child, and commend him to the protection of the Lord," answered the old man, in gentle,

comforting tones, as he laid his trembling hand upon the head of the lad. "Our case is sad, my son, but, in just such a situation is it meet for us to set our whole confidence upon God. Harken to the teachings of our blessed Lord: 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.' Comfort thyself with these precious words, my child, and pray from thy heart that God, for Christ's sake, will give thee peace, that perfect peace he has promised to bestow upon all that call upon him in spirit and in truth. Be still, my son, weep not, but rest assured that our kind Heavenly Father will make all these things work together for our good."

Jacques's tears ceased gradually to flow, and his sobs were less violent, yet he raised

not his head, but nestled still closer to the old man's side. For a long, long time they remained in this position, in perfect silence; while without, the wind roared and beat with fury against the little chalet, thick clouds of snow darkened the air, and at last, suddenly the deep darkness of night shrouded them, although the old wooden clock in the corner of the chalet had only just struck three.

"Three o'clock," said the old man, breaking the long silence. "God be thanked, François must by this time have reached the shelter of the pine-wood; else he would not be able to struggle against the terrific violence of this tempest. He must certainly be so far down at least, and this hurricane can now do him no harm. But his poor heart will be heavy for us, Jacques."

The lad sighed, but replied not, while he prayed fervently for his struggling father. The violence of the storm increased from

hour to hour, and its wild roaring, howling, and whistling made the heart of the boy tremble within him. The little window shook and rattled as the showers of snow and hail were whirled wildly against the panes.

Jacques and his grandfather had been so anxiously solicitous the entire day as to forget even hunger and thirst, until the bleating of the goat reminded them that a third living creature, helpless as themselves, was imprisoned in the little chalet.

“Poor Blanchette,” said the old man, “we have been so absorbed with our own cares, that we have entirely forgotten her: she is calling us to come and milk her. Light the lamp, my boy, so that we may find our way to the stall.”

As the light illumined the bare walls of the little kitchen, Jacques cast a hasty glance upon the face of his grandfather, and saw

with comfort, and even pleasure, that it wore a look of quiet composure. As his eyes met his grandson's anxious gaze, the old man smiled sweetly and fondly upon him, the light of which smile infused somewhat of the peace and tranquillity of his soul into the desponding heart of the poor boy. At that very moment a fresh and still more vehement gust of wind forced its way under the planks of the roof, shaking them fearfully, until it seemed as though the roof must be carried away. Involuntarily the lad cast upward a look of anxiety.

"Don't be alarmed, my child," said his grandfather, as he observed the glance; "the roof and the little chalet have resisted many such storms: you forget that the planks are held firm by good, strong stays and heavy stones; then too, the roof is so flat that it affords very little hold to the wind: go on, Jacques, that we may milk poor Blanchette."

As the goat saw them, she redoubled her bleatings, and seemed almost beside herself for joy, tugging at her rope as though she would break it to get at them. Jacques stroked her caressingly, giving her at the same time a handful of salt, which she licked greedily. She gave them a large bowl of milk, which the boy and his grandfather regarded with much satisfaction, for they had eaten nothing the entire day.

“We must take good care of Blanchette,” said the old man, as they returned to the kitchen; “we dare never neglect to feed or milk her, for our lives may depend, perhaps, upon hers.”

“You terrify me, grandfather: you surely do not fear that we will be compelled to remain here at the furthest more than a few days.”

“Who can tell?” replied his grandfather, “we may, perchance, to-morrow, or next

day, be released from our imprisonment; yet it may be that weeks elapse before we see our home in the valley. It is well to be always prepared for the worst. You both see and hear, child, that the storm has not abated, but that the snow penetrates even into our place of refuge."

They were seated beside the fire, which, although the chimney was narrow above, had several times been almost extinguished by the flakes of snow that fell whirling down. Drawing themselves into the remotest corner of the room, to avoid the cold draught of air which also descended, the poor captives sought to bear the discomforts of their painful situation with uncomplaining resignation. At length, the grandfather, laying his hand gently upon the lad's head, said:

"Jacques, my child, I fear we can only keep ourselves warm by going to bed; the snow cannot penetrate our covering, and in

our sleep the storm will not disturb us. To-morrow we will try to keep these persistent guests at a greater distance, and prepare more comfortable quarters. Come, my boy, let us commend ourselves to the watchful care and protection of our Heavenly Father; He is ever present, not only in the depths of the valley, but upon the mountain-top; and although the snow were a hundred times deeper, his eye would still rest upon us: even in this dreary, isolated chalet shall his 'right hand hold us; yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, O Lord, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.' He sees our folded hands, my child, he hears our sighs. Did not our blessed Lord, also, pass the midnight hours alone upon the mountain-top, and think you he will not pity and care for us? We will not fear, but will lie down and rest beneath the shadow of his wings."

Jacques kneeled beside his grandfather; and, strengthened and refreshed in spirit by waiting upon their God, they laid them down and slept in peace and safety, while without, the wind moaned and howled in its rage, and the snow chased in wild play around the little chalet.





CHAPTER IV.

UNDER THE SNOW.

WHEN Jacques awakened the next morning, he wondered not a little to find it was still dark, although he felt confident that he had slept longer than usual ; but hearing his grandfather moving about the room, he rubbed his eyes in astonishment, but without seeing any clearer for that.

“Grandfather,” called he, “are you up, and the day not dawned ? ”

“You are mistaken, my son,” answered the old man. “Did we wait until the morning light looks into our chalet, we would not rise at all. The sun, without doubt, has long ago risen ; our window is entirely blocked up.”

"Is it possible?" cried Jacques, springing out of bed and lighting the lamp to convince himself of the truth of the statement. "I hope you are mistaken, grandfather; it is impossible that so much snow could have fallen in one night."

"The window is not high, my lad," said the old man; "and besides, it is probable that the wind has drifted the snow on this side of the chalet: should this prove the case, we need not be disturbed; it may not be more than two or three feet deep, except in this particular spot."

"They will come to-day, to free us from our imprisonment," said the boy; "father is certainly on his way by this time."

"I hope so, but do not be too sure, Jacques; the disappointment in case they do not come will be the more bitter. Our wisest course would be to reckon up our resources, in case we are detained here any length of

time. But listen; there cries our cuckoo: seven o'clock! How fortunate it was I wound the clock yesterday evening! We must never neglect it; should I forget it, be sure to remind me of it, my lad. But now let us see how deep the snow is before the window."

At that moment the plaintive bleatings of Blanchette fell upon their ears.

"First, the poor goat; then, the snow. Jacques, she must be attended to." While his grandfather was milking, the boy stood beside him watching him closely.

"You are right, my child," said he, as he noticed it. "I would advise you to learn to milk, so that you may be able to fill my place, in case of necessity; my old limbs will scarcely bend to the task. Try, Jacques, and see what success you will meet with."

The boy kneeled down beside the goat, making at first an awkward and unsuccessful attempt, Blanchette kicking and wincing

meanwhile, and almost overturning the bowl; but after several trials it grew easier, and the goat stood quiet, giving, as she had done the night before, a large bowl of milk: Jacques carried it carefully to the kitchen, that not one drop of the precious liquid should be lost.

Making their breakfast of the fresh, sweet milk, they turned their attention again to the fallen snow. The old man opened the window a little, to see if they could measure from this point the depth of the snow-bank, but the attempt led to no satisfactory results. Closing the window, they examined the opening of the chimney, to see whether they could not thus discover some way of procedure.

Looking up through the outlet, Jacques exclaimed: "I see the sky, grandfather!" At that moment the sun shone upon the snow that surrounded the opening, and they

could easily judge the depth of the layer, as the chimney did not rise higher than the roof.

“How unfortunate that we have no ladder!” said the grandfather; “you might ascend, Jacques, and take a look around. If I remember aright, there must be a trap-door, with which the chimney can be closed, which would protect us from the cold and wet; your father placed it there, years ago, I think, when the chimney was out of repair. It would be a great convenience and protection for us, were we able to open and close it at pleasure. But I see no possibility of your climbing up to the top.”

“If the chimney were only a little narrower, I would need no ladder,” said the boy. “Can you not contrive some plan, grandfather?”

“We must try, my son, to light upon some expedient,” said the old man, reflectively. “Can you climb well, Jacques?”

"Certainly I can," answered the boy; "my companions say I can climb better than any of them; but what good will that do us, grandfather?"

"I do not think we will need a ladder, my boy. I saw somewhere in the stable a long fir pole," replied the old man. "If we could bring it here!"

"That is all I want, grandfather," said Jacques with delight; "if the pole is only long enough to reach above the opening, we have won the game."

They found the pole in the stable, as the old man had thought: it was not much thicker than one's arm, but the bark was still on, and the rough surface made it much easier to climb. With some difficulty they carried it into the kitchen and placed it in the chimney: this accomplished, and the pole proving long enough for the desired purpose, Jacques set to work, tying a string around his body,

to which was attached a shovel, so that he might draw it up after reaching the top: the lad managed so well with hands and feet, using the wall of the chimney as resting-points, that the grandfather saw, with no little satisfaction, that Jacques had not without some foundation boasted of his dexterity in climbing. It was but a few moments before the top was reached. Drawing up the shovel, he cleared away an open space, so that he might have a firm foot-hold. And, stepping upon the roof, he took a view of the surroundings: the snow lay about the depth of three feet upon the roof of the chalet, but, as his grandfather had thought, the wind had drifted it into a heap around the little building, covering it almost entirely; but not only immediately around them lay the snow; an enormous mass must have fallen: as far as the eye of the boy could reach, everything was hidden under a glittering

white mantle. The declivities far down to the fir-woods which skirted the valley, the hills far and near, the plains, abysses, and gorges, all were enveloped in one wide-spread covering: nothing interrupted the monotony of this winter landscape, save the black trunks of the firs; some of the trees were almost crushed under their burden of snow, while large limbs had been rent away, and were protruding stiff and dark from the snowy mass.

A cold and bitter north wind was blowing; the sky was covered with dark clouds, which the wind chased rapidly away. Through the openings, bright gleams of sunshine glanced here and there upon the field of snow—the glittering streaks gliding with the swiftness of an arrow over mountain and valley.

Jacques enjoyed the view, and would, perhaps, have remained much longer, if the cold had not prevented: as he described to his

grandfather what he saw, his teeth chattered with cold, so that the old man in alarm bade him to make haste and shovel the snow from the trap-door, and from around the aperture of the chimney. "That will warm you up, my son: make haste."

Jacques came to the conclusion that it was better to shovel than freeze, and resumed his work; it took some time, and soon the drops of sweat rolled down his face from the arduous labor; but at length it was accomplished, and a loud huzza made known to the grandfather his success. Jacques now passed the cord he had taken with him, through a pulley, so that when they would draw it from below, the trap would open, while its own weight would cause it to close. When they had tested this several times, and convinced themselves that all worked well, Jacques climbed again through the chimney, and

descended with more ease than he had mounted.

His grandfather now observed that his clothes were saturated by the melted snow, which was a serious matter, as he had no others. Some precaution must be taken to protect him against the cold; so making a fire of brush and fir-cones upon the hearth, and drawing shut the trap-door, leaving only sufficient space for the smoke to escape, they seated themselves for the rest of the day beside the great fire-place, watching the flickering flames, and listening to the howling blast.

Their store of oil was so scanty that they did not dare to light the lamp, except for a few moments when they went to the stall to milk the goat.

Jacques found it a dull and sad life, and it appeared to him as though the day had no end: the hours would have passed more

rapidly, and proved less wearisome, had he been employed; then, too, he was momentarily expecting the arrival of his father for their rescue; he was constantly in a state of painful agitation; at every sound, at the roaring of the wind, the crackling of a spark, he would spring up, and listen intently, almost persuading himself that he could distinguish approaching footsteps; several times during the day he ascended to the roof to look for the stalwart form of his father. In vain his grandfather sought to soothe this feverish restlessness; he asked repeatedly whether his father had not long since reached home; if he did not think he had called upon the neighbors for help. The poor old man, who, as ardently as his grandson, desired their rescue, could only reply that he hoped François had reached the valley in safety, and if so, he felt assured that he would not lose a moment, and would

spare no exertion to come to their relief. "But the path, Jacques," said he, "may be so completely blocked up with snow, that it will not be possible to reach us for some time. We must only be patient, and wait."

But this suggestion brought no comfort to the restless lad. At last, his grandfather, rising, closed the chimney by the aid of the trap, so as to shut out the cold air; and after an earnest prayer for protection, and patience to endure the will of God without murmuring, and feeling assured that he would pity and care for them, for the sake of his only Son our Lord, who, when he was on earth, had not where to lay his head, he betook himself to his hard couch, and persuaded Jacques to follow his example. His grandfather heard the poor, agitated lad sob for a long time, until blessed sleep, at last, put an end to the hopes and bitter disappointments of the day,

enfolding him lovingly under her soft, gentle wings.

On the following morning, as Jacques tried to open the trap, he found it stubbornly resisted all his efforts. Calling upon his grandfather for assistance, they at last succeeded, after considerable difficulty, in forcing it aside; they soon found out the cause: there had been another heavy storm during the night, and the boy found, when he clambered up, at least two feet of fresh snow. His grandfather, meanwhile, prepared to make a fire upon the hearth, and with some solicitude waited the descent of the lad.

“It is as I thought,” said he, with a sigh, as Jacques stated how matters stood. “The snow, which has drifted more and more, will not melt again, my child, before the spring, and will, without doubt, prove an insurmountable barrier in the path of your father. We will have to accustom ourselves, I fear, to

the thought of remaining buried in this snow-bound chalet for weeks, ay, for months! We must not flatter ourselves with delusive hopes, which, 'long deferred, make the heart sick.' Let us rather look upon the dark side, and pray God to grant us grace to say, as did our blessed Lord: 'Not my will, but thine be done.' "

"Do you really mean, grandfather, that this day too will pass away without help from our friends?" questioned the troubled, desponding lad.

"Impossible, altogether impossible for them to reach us," he replied, with decision; "yesterday I entertained only the slightest hope, and this morning I feel assured it is too late: the snow is at least two feet deeper, and must have drifted in such masses that no human strength could overcome the difficulties of the ascent; they could not accomplish it, my son. I will be thankful to God

if only your father reached the valley in safety, Jacques. To count upon his help would be folly: though he should call upon all the villages around, all arms would be powerless to make a path for us."

The boy listened to his grandfather with greater composure than could have been expected. Some moments he stood with bowed head and clasped hands, plunged in deep thought, while the tears coursed rapidly down his pale cheeks; then with sudden resolve summoning all his courage, he raised his head and wiped away the tears, while he said, in a voice that gathered firmness as he proceeded:

"If human help fail us, grandfather, we can lean upon the almighty arm of our God; and here is my hand that I will not again grieve you with my childish impatience, as I did yesterday. I will stand firmly by your side, and not one more complaint shall cross my

lips while we are imprisoned in the chalet; and may God help me to keep my resolve."

"He will help you, my son," said the old man, as he with emotion pressed the hand of the brave lad; "if you adhere to this determination, then, with the aid of our Heavenly Father, all will be well. We are not entirely without resources, and if we use them economically they will last until the spring, and our release comes."

With such words, in this wise did the aged man infuse strength and courage into the drooping heart of his grandson. Several days elapsed without anything of importance taking place, except that the snow fell almost incessantly. Jacques, to relieve the monotony of their life, commenced, at his grandfather's suggestion, a diary: he found a supply of paper, pens, and ink, which he had brought during the summer

holidays upon a visit to his father, so as to pursue his tasks, and had forgotten to take them with him when he returned home, little thinking what a treasure they one day would prove. He wrote by the glow of the fire, and many an hour did he thus spend both pleasantly and profitably.

One day, as Jacques and his grandfather sat by the fire, the kind old man having given to the boy some examples in arithmetic to pass away the time—to save the little store of paper, Jacques had drawn some ashes from the hearth, and had strewed them in a thin layer upon its flat surface: this served him instead of a slate, while he marked the figures with a sharp-pointed stick. The lad had not been careful in spreading the ashes, and while both were engaged with an example, they suddenly felt an unusual degree of heat, and turning, they saw with affright that a bundle of straw

which lay beside the ash-pile had ignited, and was burning rapidly.

The venturous boy without a moment's delay threw his arms around the straw, and endeavored in this manner to extinguish the flames: he was unable, however, to accomplish his purpose, and both hands were burned in his efforts.

His grandfather now hastily seized the burning mass, and, in spite of the danger and pain, carried it directly under the chimney.

"Jacques," cried he, "quick! move to one side everything that can take fire."

The boy had soon thrown into the centre of the room the wooden stool and fuel which had been piled upon the hearth, and then hastened to render assistance to his grandfather. With the help of a pitch-fork and the shovel, they pressed the burning straw against the wall: a lurid glow illuminated

the little chalet, and the room was filled with smoke, which together with the heat was almost stifling. Filled with anxiety and terror, they struggled with the strength of despair against the flames, which threatened every moment to gain the mastery. Not a drop of water was at hand, no outlet for the smoke, but, in spite of the heat and smoke, they held the bundle firm until the most of it had been consumed. The bright sparks flew from one side of the chalet to the other, lighting now upon the straw bed in the corner, then upon the dry rafters of the ceiling, and upon the wooden partition that separated the stall from the kitchen: the eyes of the poor frightened captives followed them in their play, and it seemed as though hours must have elapsed before the flames gradually expired, and at last were entirely extinguished.

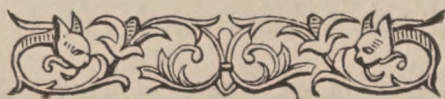
When the last spark died out, and dense

darkness reigned in place of the bright red glow, the first feeling of the alarmed pair — who were completely exhausted with terror and exertion — was one of thankfulness toward God, who in so wonderful a manner had protected them in the midst of such fearful danger. Gradually the stifling smoke vanished, and, lighting their lamp, they sat down in tolerable composure, and talked over their fears and their almost miraculous preservation.

“It was in a great measure our own fault,” said the old man to Jacques; “persons in our situation should have shown more foresight: if we had only had a bucket of water standing near, it would not have happened. Let this occurrence serve as a lesson for the future. Somewhere in the dairy I have seen an old empty cask: if we place it in the corner of the kitchen and fill it with snow, which would soon melt, then we would at

least feel safe from a similar accident. Should our chalet burn down, even if we escaped the flames, it would inevitably result in our death, deprived as we would be of a shelter from the extreme cold, without food, and no prospect of ever reaching the valley. And now let us secure the cask without delay."

This work was soon accomplished: fastening the bottom of the cask more securely, they had, in order to fill it, only to open the door of their chalet, and close against them rose a firm white wall of snow, a wall which inexorably separated them from all the rest of the world. The thought occurred to both, as with shovel in hand they went to work, with heavy hearts and eyes filled with tears, each striving to hide from the other the sad and painful thoughts with which they were oppressed.





CHAPTER V.

THE LIFE OF THE CAPTIVES.

THE snow fell incessantly, day and night; and such masses accumulated upon the roof, that Jacques's grandfather became seriously troubled.

"The weight will prove too heavy," said he. "I fear the rafters will give way, if we do not find some way of relieving it of its load."

"That can be done without much trouble, grandfather," replied the boy, as he actively ascended to the trap, drawing after him the shovel, as usual. For several hours he worked, in order to clear the roof of a portion of the snow with which it was laden,

leaving only a layer sufficiently thick to protect them from the cold.

This employment, although so arduous, served as an amusement, varying in some degree the wearisome monotony of his life inside the chalet; and yet the view from the roof, extended though it was, presented to the eye or heart of the poor boy no comfort: it was a bleak, cheerless scene. The snow covered the ground in such enormous masses as scarcely to leave any of the inequalities distinguishable. The sky hung dark and heavy over the dreary landscape, and Jacques thought, as he gazed, of stories he had heard of voyagers in the ice-bound seas of the polar regions: sighing, he turned and descended the chimney, feeling he would rather endure the confinement of the narrow limits of the chalet than gaze longer upon the expanded but soul-depressing view of this bleak, desolate scene.

His grandfather observed his dejected mood, and at once sought to devise some amusement to divert his sad thoughts. An inventory of their resources was speedily instituted, and soon the boy was busily engaged in searching every nook and corner of the chalet. The solitary little dwelling was not destitute of every comfort; they found hay and straw, more than Blanchette would consume during a whole year. Should she continue to yield them milk, they had in her an invaluable resource; but an accident might deprive them, at any time, of this support: they were therefore delighted to find in a corner of the stall a little store of potatoes, which they carefully covered with straw, to protect them from the cold. They also found in the stable a quantity of wood, though not sufficient to last during the winter, should their captivity continue so long. It was resolved to make use of it only in

their extreme necessity, and under all circumstances to keep the trap carefully closed, so that the warmth should not escape. The snow which surrounded the chalet contributed, also, to keep them warm.

Besides the wood, Jacques came across a heap of fir-cones, which he had collected the previous summer, and fortunately neglected to carry down to the valley: these would serve as an excellent substitute for fuel; and should it be necessary, they could burn the hay-racks and the mangers in the stable; the old man saying: "If the ship is in danger, the cargo must be cast into the sea." On account of the far advanced season, the chalet was partially unfurnished, the greater part of the effects having been taken down to the village. The great caldron had been left, a few cooking utensils, and some tools: the edge of the axe, to be sure, was notched and jagged, and the saw dull; but these were,

in their situation, invaluable treasures: they had each, also, their pocket-knives. But it was much worse with the provisions: they found only three loaves of Westphalia rye bread, of the kind that can be kept for a year or longer, and which becomes so hard that it must be chopped up with an axe or hatchet. These were stowed away in an old oaken closet, where they discovered, besides, some salt, ground coffee, oil, and quite a quantity of lard—treasures which they, in their present situation, would not have exchanged for their weight in gold.

“The lard will prove very acceptable to us,” said Jacques, as he placed it carefully in one of the drawers.

“It certainly will,” replied his grandfather, “but we dare not use it in our cooking: we must preserve it for the winter, for fear our small stock of oil runs out.”

“That would be better, grandfather,” said

the boy; "it is too dreary to live in perpetual night." And now the groping hand of the boy pulled out from behind the oaken closet an old, dusty book, quite covered with cobwebs, which must have lain there, forgotten, for many long years. The old man's heart throbbed with joy as Jacques opened it, and read the title: "Thomas à Kempis."

"Oh! my son," he cried, as he heard the name, "that is the best friend, except God's Holy Book, that could visit us in our solitude; a blessed treasure to all unhappy sufferers; it teaches us that there is only one evil in this world of ours: 'to forget God;' and only one source of happiness: 'to love God.' You see, my child, though solitary, we are not forsaken; we have found many things to nourish the body; and now we possess, also, most precious nourishment for our souls: it will impart to us much com-

fort, strength, and encouragement. God be thanked for this proof of his love."

The rest of the day was passed in a further investigation, resulting, however, in no new discovery of importance; but well satisfied with their day's work, they laid themselves down to rest, their hearts filled with thankfulness toward God, who had so manifestly exhibited his loving-kindness and watchful care for them.

Upon awakening the next morning, they found the snow was still falling; it was the 27th day of November: even on the mountains, and during this season of the year, it was exceedingly rare to see so great a quantity of snow fall. The deeper the snow, the lower the hopes for release of the poor prisoners. Jacques, who had always entertained a firm hope that his father could overcome all obstacles to effect their rescue, now sank into despondency. His grandfather saw the

necessity of changing the current of his thoughts: employment, physical or mental, he knew would prove the most effectual method of effecting the desired result. Exerting himself to the utmost, he talked with him, giving him, sometimes, riddles and examples which would require all his mind and memory to solve; and when he became weary of this employment, he would relate to him many pleasing incidents from the varied experiences of his long life, or from interesting books he had read: his manner was pleasing and instructive, and in this way many a good lesson was learned, as well as many an otherwise sorrowful hour passed pleasantly away.

His grandfather, restoring the cheerfulness and serenity of the boy's mind by these means, thought he might now call his attention to a matter which, although painful, was necessitous and irremediable. As already

stated, they possessed only a small stock of oil: if they continued to burn their lamp, as they hitherto had done, for twelve hours of the day, it would in all probability be consumed within one month's time; then they would necessarily be confined to a long period of total darkness, at least until deliverance came. That must be prevented if possible, and the old man sorrowfully communicated the painful information to Jacques. The lad was startled, and shrank, at first, from the horrible thought of perpetual night: how could they give up the comforting, friendly light of their little lamp? But a short reflection convinced him that his grandfather's fear was well grounded, and a stricter economy in the use of the precious oil an imperative necessity. After mature deliberation, it was resolved that the lamp should only be burned during three hours, and that they would for the rest of the day be content

with the faint light of their little fire upon the hearth. Again was the old man obliged to exert himself to the utmost to cheer and shorten for the poor boy the long, long hours of darkness. As they had straw in plenty, he taught Jacques to weave cords and bands of the same, which were serviceable for a variety of uses; this employment they could carry on by the fire-light.

With such occupations and amusements was ushered in the first day of December; the snow still fell, without intermission, until it was now level with the roof of the chalet, indeed even covering it, so that they were literally buried alive. Every morning must Jacques ascend the chimney, and clear away the snow, so as to be able to open the trap-door, to admit the fresh air, and make an outlet for the stifling smoke to escape when they made the fire.

“Our situation is not, to be sure, of the

pleasantest," said his grandfather, one day, when the lad descended the chimney, looking more than usually depressed; "but our lot is less wretched than that of many prisoners who are as guiltless as we. We have fire, and, some hours in the day at least, light; we enjoy also a certain amount of liberty and amusement to vary our lives, which is unattainable within the four walls of many an unhappy cell. We dread not each day the entrance of a cruel, hard-hearted jailer; and, beyond all, the sufferings which the inscrutable will of God lays upon us, are never so bitter and intolerable as those which we attribute to the injustice of man; and lastly, my boy, we are not condemned to solitary confinement, but can cheer and comfort each other. I do not say that I would not far rather that you were in security at our home in the valley; but as God has so willed it, I find in your presence

an unceasing source of comfort and peace. Poor Blanchette, too, serves to make our imprisonment far less painful than it otherwise would be, and it would be a source of much sorrow did we lose her — not merely for the sake of the milk she gives us, but for the sake of her companionship.”

“You are right, grandfather,” said Jacques; “our fate is not altogether devoid of comfort: you have often told me, and it is certainly true, ‘Shared joy is double joy, shared sorrow is half sorrow.’ Now, since you have called my attention to the thought, I see why Blanchette bleats so plaintively when we leave her alone in her stall every morning and evening. The poor creature grieves sorely for company: what should prevent us from having her here with us? she can be placed in a corner of the kitchen; it is large enough for us three. She will be so happy to be with us; and who knows if

she will not, in her thankfulness, give us more and richer milk. Shall I make a place for her, grandfather?"

"I do not object to the plan, my lad," smilingly replied the old man; "but, on the contrary, think your idea most excellent."

Jacques waited only for the acquiescence of his grandfather; then, nailing a little manger against the wall with large wooden pegs, and supporting it with a few stakes, he hastened to the stall, and led Blanchette into her new home.

It was truly affecting to witness the joy of the poor creature. She sprang around in her delight, bleating for pleasure, overwhelming them with her stormy caresses, until they became almost burdensome. The grandfather, thinking she would in time become accustomed to her new position, indulged her, and at last she laid herself quietly down in her corner; and from her large, soft eyes,

which were turned thankfully upon her benefactors, beamed the intensity of the satisfaction she felt at the change.

“You see already the result of one good work,” said his grandfather, smiling and pointing to Blanchette: “there beats now, in our lonely little chalet, one happy heart at least.”

Upon the 3d of December, as Jacques ascended the chimney to shovel off the snow from the trap, he saw with joy that the storm had ceased, that the sky was clear and cloudless, and the air pure and cold. The extended white expanse of snow reflected the bright beams of the sun, and almost dazzled him as he gazed. He remained upon the roof longer than usual, enjoying the sunshine, and the wide view that opened before him. Thinking how pleasant it would be to share his joy with his grandfather, and how delighted he would be to catch even

one ray of sunshine, the thought suddenly occurred to him :

“What if I should shovel away the snow from the door, and make a path upward to the surface of the drift?”

Filled with this idea, he descended and communicated it to his grandfather, who feared the labor and exposure would prove too great ; but the sanguine lad would listen to no objections of this kind, and set to work at once. When he opened the door and looked upon the firm, frozen wall before him, the work did not appear quite so attainable as the boy, in the first glow of his zeal, had believed ; but the thought of rendering such a service, and opening a source of pleasure to his grandfather, stimulated him to exertion, and animated him with fresh courage and endurance : boldly he commenced his assault upon the formidable barrier.

All day long the lad labored untiringly,

and would have worked yet longer, had not his grandfather insisted upon his stopping for the time. The next morning, he set to afresh: it was hard toil, but he was convinced that labor and perseverance would accomplish the desired result. His work progressed slowly but surely; fortunately for him, the snow was neither too firm to resist his efforts, nor too loose to render his work ineffectual. At length, upon the third day, the path was made, and Jacques had the pleasure of leading his grandfather out of the chalet into the pure, free air. Supported upon one side by the arm of his grandson, and upon the other by a railing, which Jacques had made out of consideration for the lame foot, the old man trod with pleasure the path which so much love and toil had made.

The day was dark and gloomy and their joy was mingled with melancholy, as they reached the end of the avenue and contem-

plated the threatening sky; the snow surrounded them on all sides, and the dark trunks of the fir-trees. It was a bleak, dreary scene, upon which the silence of death seemed to brood; a cold, inanimate scene: nought disturbed its desolate monotony save a solitary bird of prey, which passed at some distance through the air, and, with a hoarse scream, darted down into the valley, flying in the direction of the village where the home of the poor captives lay.

With a heavy sigh, the old man's gaze followed its flight. "Our pagan ancestors," said he, "would have regarded the appearance of this bird of prey, his cry, and the direction of his flight, as ominous of good or evil, and it would have inspired either fear or hope. But we! will we ever again follow the direction this eagle has taken? God alone knows, and he is too good and too wise to raise the veil and disclose the

future to our eyes. Come, come, my dear boy, and let us await with patience and submission what the Almighty has seen fit to hide from us. I thank you heartily for all the trouble you have taken for me; and another day I will, I trust, fully enjoy the result of so much love and labor."

They returned to the chalet after all their pleasant anticipations, sorrowful and depressed: for the rest of the day they were thoughtful and silent; the peaceful serenity they had for some time enjoyed they could not recover. Constantly their thoughts reverted to the valley, and they longed for the wings of a bird—then would *they* flee away and be at rest.





CHAPTER VI.

WOLVES.

UPON the following morning the poor prisoners had so far recovered from their depression as to be able to plan with some spirit and pleasure for their future comfort. Jacques's grandfather proposed that they should free the window from the snow which blocked it up, and the boy went to work with vigor, although it was still harder than making the path through the snow: there he was only obliged to throw it to one side and the other, but from the window he must throw it upward, so as to afford ready entrance for the light. He would not suffer his grandfather to assist him, fearing

he might, by so doing, endanger his precious health.

Instead of digging a tunnel, he now had to bore a pit or shaft in the snow. The work progressed but slowly. By the evening of the first day he had, although working hard and steadily, accomplished so little that he could scarcely hope to finish entirely before three or four days at the least. Upon the next day he went to work with renewed energy, and shovelled away with a zeal in which all prudence was forgotten. As he cast the snow out of the hole, he heaped it upon the upper edge, until it gradually formed a sort of wall: his grandfather warned him not to make it too high, fearing it might fall upon him; but the lad in his excitement entirely forgot the warning, and the catastrophe happened that had been predicted. The wall fell, and the poor boy's work was not only destroyed, but he was

buried under the mass. Managing to free his head quickly, he escaped a horrible death; but all his strength failed to extricate himself further. After he had made many fruitless attempts, he called upon his grandfather for help. Providentially the falling of the wall had made a breach, through which the old man, though with difficulty, forced his way, and shovelled the snow to one side. When Jacques had recovered the use of his arms, it was not long until he was freed from the cold embrace.

“You see, my son, that even in the best of causes we must never lose sight of prudence,” said his grandfather, with gentle reproof.

“I have acted foolishly,” said Jacques, “very foolishly, but it will be a good lesson for me; and to-morrow I will commence my work wiser than yesterday.”

But when the lad attempted to resume the

quickly interrupted task, he found that, for that day, the shovel must be laid aside. All day long the snow fell heavily, and the wind blew cold and fierce. Remaining within the chalet, he plaited his straw, milked the goat, and prepared their simple meals, hoping it would cease to snow during the night.

Vain hope! Upon reaching his head out of the trap, he found the wind raging furiously; the snow-flakes striking his face with such violence as almost to blind him. Drawing back quickly, he pulled the trap close and descended.

“What fearful weather!” said he. “It is worse than any we have yet experienced since our imprisonment.”

Jacques had not yet learned what a hurricane upon the mountain was like. Notwithstanding the covering of snow with which the chalet was enveloped, the roaring and

howling of the tempest penetrated within it, and filled the sinking heart of the boy with terror. Upon their attempting to open the door, the room was filled with clouds of snow, and the wind raged with such violence that they could only with the greatest difficulty, and by their united strength, again close it. It was impossible to open the trap, for the wind rushed down howling like some terrific monster through the chimney, chasing clouds of snow before it. All must remain carefully closed, and in consequence our poor captives were forced to extinguish the fire upon the hearth, as the smoke had no outlet to escape.

They sat for hours in total darkness, and listened with heavy hearts to the wild raging of the tempest. Jacques trembled with each repeated shock, and his grandfather could scarcely quiet his fears. In order to draw his attention from the weather, he assigned

him various employments, and at last succeeded in comforting him by speaking of the compassion and everlasting love of their God.

“ ‘Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,’ my boy. The power that appears to-day so fearful, is unchangeably the same — merciful and gracious, while it threatens to desolate heaven and earth in its wrath : all this storm serves as a merciful messenger, which eternal wisdom has sent to call out of this seeming chaos a new creation. It heaps masses of snow upon our mountains, so that they, in the spring, as fertilizing streams and brooks, may pour down, and waken our meadows and our fields. Without this yearly preparation, the fertility which depends upon these masses of snow would be at an end, the fresh green grass would not sprout, no flowers would delight us with their fragrance and beauty,

and our blessed valleys and fields would be transformed into sterile wastes. The same Power that 'giveth snow like wool, that scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes, that casteth forth his ice like morsels, sendeth out his word and melteth them.' Let us, my dear boy, 'praise the name of the Lord, for he is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.' Fear not, Jacques.

“ ‘Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His works in vain:
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.’ ”

Jacques's agitation was somewhat allayed through these calm, comforting words, when suddenly a powerful concussion shook the little chalet to its very foundations, and the door creaked and groaned as though it would break in pieces. The grandfather involuntarily arose.

“What is that?” cried Jacques, in affright.
“Will our chalet be blown away?”

“I hope not, my child,” replied the old man, regaining his composure. “Light the lamp, Jacques, and we will see what has happened.”

The boy obeyed, and the grandfather, opening the door, found that an enormous mass of snow had fallen, and they were imprisoned, as they had been before the tunnel had been dug.

“Grieve not, my lad, that your work has been destroyed, but think rather what would have happened to us if our chalet had not been snowed up: we are surrounded as by a protecting wall; without it we could not have hoped our chalet to resist the shocks of the hurricane; so this immense mass of snow, in which we are enveloped, has again proved to us a blessing, which calls for gratitude to God, who has, by its shelter, pro-

tected us from great danger, if not from sudden death."

The storm lasted until night, and they laid themselves down upon their hard bed, and sought to rest after the exhausting fears and agitations of the day—quietly and trustingly confiding in the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

The next morning, the violence of the storm having somewhat abated, they tried to open the trap, but it resisted all their efforts; both window and door indicated that they were again completely buried in the snow. They were obliged to pass the entire day without fire, except occasionally lighting fir-cones to create, for a few moments, a little light and warmth. Jacques and his grandfather passed a sorrowful and wearisome day.

Upon the 11th of December, the lad awakened shaking with cold, and chilled to

his very heart. Possessing no means of warming themselves, for they dared not attempt to light a fire, fearing they should be suffocated by the smoke, they passed a sad and uncomfortable day. Blanchette too appeared to suffer, bleating plaintively, and ceasing not, although Jacques caressed her tenderly. It required all their confidence and strength not to lose in their present situation all courage and hope, and sink into helpless despondency and grief; but this strength of soul and power of endurance the grandfather possessed in a remarkable degree: no word of complaint, not a sigh escaped his lips; and Jacques would not be less cheerful, less courageous than the feeble, delicate old man who set him so noble an example.

A day or two passed without any variation in the monotony of their lives, when an occurrence took place which caused them considerable alarm.

As Jacques was one morning milking the goat, while the grandfather was lighting a small fire of fir-cones upon the hearth, Blanchette suddenly pricked up her ears, as though she heard an unusual noise, trembling at the same time in all her limbs.

"What is the matter, Blanchette?" asked Jacques, caressing her; "what terrifies you? Hold still, my pretty one; no harm shall come to you."

Instead of becoming reassured by the boy's manner, the goat exhibited new signs of terror, and, nestling close to Jacques, bleated her fears.

At that moment the lad heard low and distant howlings, which gradually grew more and more distinct, until the noise sounded overhead, and they could hear the pattering of feet upon the crisp snow.

"Grandfather," cried the boy, in agitated tones, "they are wolves."

"Hush, my child, and try to keep Blanchette quiet," said the old man, extending at the same time a handful of salt toward the poor creature, who still trembled violently.

"How fortunate we are snowed up again!" whispered the grandfather; "without this, the fierce beasts would soon have discovered us. But we must be upon our guard, Jacques, and be prepared for an attack: speak low, my boy, and try to keep Blanchette from bleating."

They passed some moments of painful suspense: when suddenly the howlings redoubled.

"They burrow sometimes through the snow," whispered the lad, while he pressed his grandfather's arm in his terror; "we shall be torn in pieces."

"Not so, my child," he answered; "we are certainly in a dangerous situation, yet I do not think the wolves will find us out, unless

the bleatings of the goat betray us. These animals in all probability will not remain long upon the height, where there is but little to be had, but will scour down toward the plains, and in the outskirts of the villages. It may be only accident that has led them overhead, or it may be they are tearing to pieces a deer or chamois, which they have killed, and are consuming it upon the spot: hence the howlings that so terrify us."

"But if they should force their way through! what then?" asked the boy.

"I do not believe that will happen; but should it, we must defend ourselves as courageously as possible. We have for defence the axe, the pitchfork, and our knives: even if they should scent us out, it would be a difficult matter for them to break through the roof. It is fortunate that your tunnel has filled up, my boy; we should be thankful

indeed that God has in this manner again protected us, turning the seeming evil into a blessing."

The goat bleated loudly as Jacques was about to reply, and on the instant the fierce howlings redoubled in intensity. The boy's cheek blanched, and the old man's hitherto peaceful manner indicated some anxiety, as he listened intently.

He said, "There is no longer room for doubt. Blanchette's bleatings have betrayed us, and we must redouble our vigilance: the wolves may seek to press through the roof! hark, they are scratching away the snow! quick, Jacques, light the lamp: courage, my child, our roof is firm, and we have weapons for our defence. We can retire from one intrenchment to the other; we have dairy and stall, into which we can retreat. But above all, let us have light, my son."

The boy, roused by his grandfather's

words from the stupor of his fright, hastened to obey his directions.

"Now take the axe, my son, and bring me the pitch-fork," said he, hurriedly. Thus standing, they awaited momentarily the fearful attack, which apparently would not much longer be delayed. The old man cast one searching glance upon his grandson, and was well satisfied with the boy's manful bearing. Jacques's eyes sparkled, his teeth were pressed tightly together, showing no longer the slightest trace of fear.

The howlings of the blood-thirsty creatures continued, and the boy and his grandfather listened intently.

"They are not here—they are over the dairy," said the old man, suddenly: "we must look, Jacques."

Taking the lamp, they entered the milk-room, Blanchette following, though she

would not cross the threshold, showing signs of intense fear.

“I am right in my conjecture: Blanchette confirms it,” said the grandfather. “Do you not hear, Jacques? The noise the animals make is much more distinct here than in the kitchen. We can defend ourselves now much better than there. Put the lamp in the corner, so that it be not extinguished in the struggle. Now the table, here, my lad, so that you can reach the rafters without difficulty. Now up, my boy, and keep a brave heart.”

Some moments of almost breathless suspense followed, when suddenly the planks upon the roof creaked: the wolves had evidently digged their way through the snow. Jacques tightened his hold upon his weapon.

At that moment the paw of a wolf was inserted through a small opening he had made:

Jacques did not shrink, but with one stroke severed it at the knee.

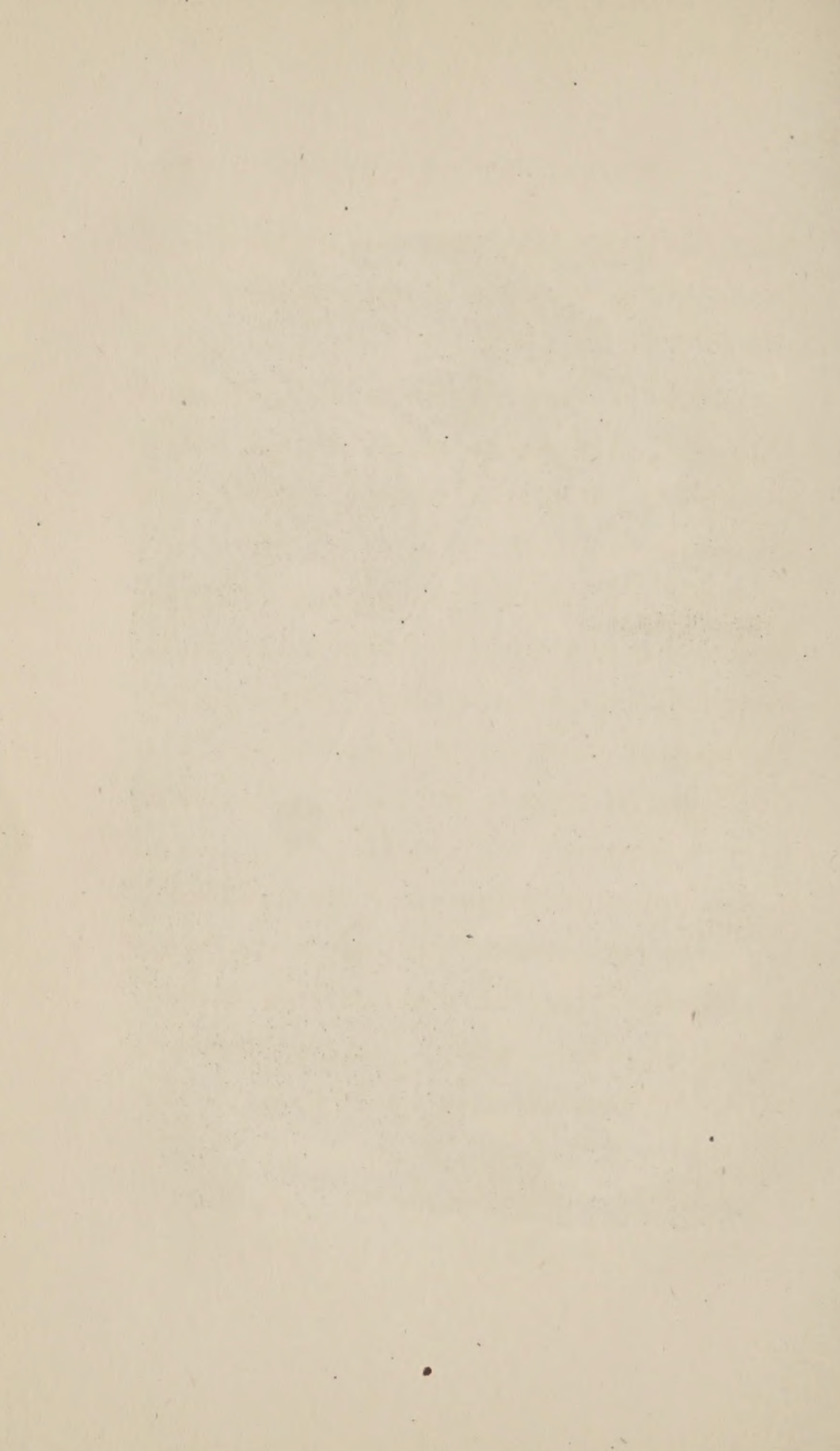
“Well done, my lad,” cried the old man; “he is at least harmless; one less to struggle against. I do not believe there are more than four or five, Jacques.” These words had hardly escaped his lips, when, from the gradually widening opening, the head of a second wolf protruded, glaring upon his opponent with voracious and blood-thirsty eye. The boy did not hesitate, but, with all his strength, drove his axe into the skull of the animal, who drew back with a howl of rage and pain. Without doubt, had not Jacques and his grandfather the advantage of their position, they would have been torn in pieces by the rest of the enraged animals, who appeared to be aroused to uncontrollable fury by the blood of their comrades. And now, a third and fourth continued the attack, splintering the shingles with their

sharp claws, and tearing them aside. A moment more, and both would have sprung into the chalet; but the brave old man drove the sharp iron prongs of the pitchfork into the breast of one, and the axe of Jacques struck off a second paw: and now followed blow upon blow, thrust upon thrust; the blood streamed down from the roof, and the raging beasts were only kept from falling through by the cross-beams of the chalet. The howls of rage were gradually exchanged for those of pain, and as the old man gave one last, effective stab, they retreated as abruptly as they came.

“Do you think they will return, grandfather?” inquired the lad, while he wiped the sweat and blood from his face. “Will they come back?”

“I think not, my child: they have had enough this time; still, it would be prudent to remain at our post. Two or three, at





least, will die from the wounds received. But stop! what is that? do you hear anything?"

Jacques grasped his axe convulsively, and listened. "It is the wolves," said he; "they howl still; but it is as though they had attacked one another."

"That is it," replied the old man. "Thank God, we are now safe. The stronger, no doubt, have fallen upon the weaker: they are feasting upon the flesh of their comrades. You can leave your post, my son; we need fear them no longer."

The boy sprang from the table, and throwing his arms around the old man's neck, exclaimed: "God be thanked, that He has protected us from death: that was the most fearful hour we have yet passed in the chalet, grandfather!"

"I trembled for you, my boy," replied the old man; "now I dare confess it; but God

heard my fervent prayers. To him be all the praise and glory. Oh ! my child, I shudder when I think what a fate might have been ours."

A long time they stood in a close embrace, each returning thanks for the signal mercy shown them in this hour of sore need.

The necessary preparations were now made to protect themselves against a second attack : by the time they were completed, evening had come, and, tired in body and mind, the exhausted old man and his brave grandson sought and found rest, and sweet refreshing sleep, until another day awakened them to new sorrows and joys, new hopes and cares.





CHAPTER VII.

THE BITTER CUP.

NOTWITHSTANDING Jacques's thankfulness for his deliverance from a horrible death, he awoke upon the following morning feeling more than usually depressed: their imprisonment seemed to him more irksome than ever, for he knew that now it was not only necessary to remain within the chalet, but that they could no longer admit the pure, fresh air into their little room: door and window must be suffered to remain blocked up with snow, and neither he nor his grandfather could refresh their weary eyes with the light of the sun or the blue heavens. Without this protect-

ing wall of snow, their situation would have been in the highest degree critical.

Before the visit of the wolves, the boy had in imagination drawn a cheerful and almost pleasant picture of the way they would pass their time in the little chalet; but now there remained to them only the same cheerless monotony, and no relief from the darkness which hemmed them in. All the hopes from which he had derived comfort, courage, and endurance, had been crushed at one blow. Then, too, their scanty store of provisions was gradually diminishing, and they were beginning to feel the want of more nourishing food; their diet consisted of the goat's milk and a piece of hard bread, varied occasionally with a potato, seasoned with a little salt.

The boy's grandfather sought to cheer and comfort him in his despondency, and reconcile him to his hard fate. At last

Jacques found employment, that for a few days at least diverted the current of his thought. To guard against a second attack from the wolves, they were obliged to keep the trap carefully closed, and by so doing they could have no fire, as the smoke had no other outlet to escape. The boy found in the stall an old iron pipe, which he determined to make use of. Cutting a circular aperture in the trap large enough to admit the pipe, after much thought, contrivance, and labor, he fitted it as desired in the hole, securing it firmly with pieces of wood. And now the feasibility of the contrivance was to be tested.

A fire was kindled upon the hearth, and the poor captives saw with pleasure that it blazed cheerfully, without their being annoyed as before by the stifling smoke. This arrangement added greatly to their comfort, being both safe and convenient.

Their next employment was to barricade the window effectually, their weakest assailable point: this was done by means of poles and boards from the crib and manger.

Jacques and his grandfather preserved their little store of oil in a large stone jug, which stood in a corner of the kitchen: one day the lad accidentally overset it, which caused them both for the moment considerable alarm; fortunately there was no oil lost. To protect themselves against such a misfortune in the future, they concluded to make a hole in the ground in which to place the vessel, where it would be secure. Hardly had Jacques given the first blow of the axe, when his grandfather hurriedly called to him to desist, at the same time taking the axe out of the boy's hand, beginning himself to make the cavity, and using extreme caution in so doing.

“Why are you so careful, grandfather?”

said Jacques; "it seems almost as though you feared you would break something concealed in the earth."

"You have guessed aright," my child, "replied the old man. I expect to find in this spot what may prove to us an invaluable treasure. See, see, Jacques! I have not deceived myself—a bottle; and filled, I doubt not, with good wine."

"Did you know, grandfather, that it was buried there?" inquired the surprised lad.

"Certainly. I ought to know, for I placed it there myself," smilingly replied the old man. "Years ago I buried here four or five bottles which remained over our summer's store. I have not thought of them since; but with your first blow of the axe the remembrance returned. See, my boy, here are the other bottles." They were carefully placed in the great oaken cupboard, being reserved for time of need.

Jacques insisted that his grandfather should use of the wine at once, to restore his appetite and strength, which had been failing for some time, and the lad had felt on this account, for days past, much solicitude.

“To-day winter has commenced,” said the old man, upon the morning of the 21st of December, as Jacques was making the fire upon the hearth.

“Just commenced!” said the lad. “I thought winter had come weeks since.”

“Snow and ice have come, my lad; but not winter. It does not properly set in until the 21st. To-day the sun has reached his lowest point. For us this is the shortest day. Ninety days, and spring, bright, beautiful spring, will come to cheer us with its sprouts and blossoms, its warm sunbeams, and mild, fragrant breezes — the spring which shall open to us the door of our chalet, and restore us to liberty, to our relatives

and friends. Ninety days, Jacques, and we will descend the old well-known paths to our beloved home in the valley."

"Ninety days! that is a long, long time, grandfather," replied the boy. "Would to God they were passed!"

"They will pass away, as have the early days of our captivity; and the more quickly, the more courageously we look them in the face," answered the grandfather. "We must try to shorten the time by some kind of employment. To be sure, we are obliged to sit in darkness, but we know even the blind can employ their time usefully."

Jacques eagerly seized this suggestion, and tried to weave his straw bands in the darkness. At first it appeared as though he would never be able to do it; but after some time, the work became easier, and he soon found the sense of touch replaced, in a certain degree, that of sight. He exerted himself dili-

gently and perseveringly, so that before long he could plait as quickly and neatly as by the light of the lamp. And thus he lamented less the want of light, which had induced weariness and tiresome inactivity.

And now the Christmas festival had come. For the poor captives the holy day was not one of joy, but of sorrow. With inexpressible longings did they think of home, and in fancy they mingled with the dearly loved group. Would they ever see them again? would they ever enjoy with them the Christmas feast? should they ever walk with them to the house of God, to give thanks for His most precious gift to poor, sinful, suffering man? or sing praises to the holy child Jesus? Jacques and his grandfather spent the day in meditation and prayer.

The poor old man had not been well for some days, complaining of intense pain in his limbs. Jacques noticed, with much so-

licitude, that his feet were much swollen, particularly the one he had injured. His heart sank, as the thought for the first time presented itself that his grandfather might die before their time of deliverance would come. The same thought seemed to have burdened the mind of the old man. He had been all day unusually silent and thoughtful; toward evening he roused himself from his abstraction.

“‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?’” said he. “Have we a right to murmur or complain, my son, when we think of the blessed Saviour, who voluntarily, for the salvation of poor sinners, left the glory of heaven, and came down to earth, where he drained the bitter cup of sorrow? What are our sufferings compared with his? We have a shelter and a refuge. God’s own Son had nowhere to lay His head. We, perchance,

are forgotten of men. Jesus, the holy, innocent Lamb of God, was by men persecuted, mocked, yea, even put to death, the cruel death of the cross. We have no right to be impatient, my son, or sorrowful. Let us pray, that we may be able from our hearts to say, 'O Lord, for Thy sake, I will cheerfully suffer whatsoever shall come on me with Thy permission. If it be Thy will that I should be in darkness, be Thou blessed; and if it be Thy will that I should be in light, be Thou again blessed. If Thou vouchsafe to comfort me, be Thou blessed; and if Thou wilt have me afflicted, be Thou blessed also.' "

"I will try and not murmur or complain, grandfather," replied the boy. "I will bear cheerfully all that God sends upon us, if only he spare me the bitterest cup of sorrow."

"And what is that, my child?"

“If you should be seriously sick, grandfather: I could not bear to see you suffer.”

“My dear Jacques, as bitter as this cup may appear, you must be prepared to put it to your lips: I am old, my poor body is weak, ‘held fast by many fears, racked with many cares, worn with many labors. Wherefore shall I fear to enter into my father’s kingdom, and see his glory? The days of this life have been short and evil, full of sorrow and straitnesses.’ Only one wish I have: to see you, my son, restored to your father, before I go hence. But, should God will it otherwise, and take me to himself, before we return to our home in the valley I still have confidence in you, my boy, that you will bear my death without giving way to despair. What help am I to you, my child? I am nothing but a burden—a chain which you ever drag about with you, which only your filial love for me

enables you to bear. You are the one that has labored; I have only advised. Why dread an event that sooner or later must happen? and wherefore grieve before the time? I am not so weak that there is no longer room for hope. Your love and watchful care for me, and the blessing of God upon them, can prolong my life until the spring; and I may yet see the fresh, green woods and valley."

Jacques was but little comforted by these persuasive words, and still wept, continuing the entire day sorrowful and depressed. The old man saw that the sad theme must be discontinued, and the boy's thoughts diverted, if possible.

"Jacques," said he, in cheerful tones, "something has occurred to me that I think will be to our advantage. Suppose we try to make some cheese from our goat's milk? Have you ever thought of it?"

His grandfather could not have devised anything better. So soon as the lad had employment, he forgot for the time all else, and with the ardor of youth exclaimed:

“That is a splendid idea, grandfather: to-morrow I will try what I can do.”

Upon the following day he went briskly to work: he succeeded almost beyond his expectations, the cheese looking so tempting as to delight the boy greatly; but, when Jacques brought it to his grandfather for his approval, all his fears and cares returned, for the old man was lying down, feeling too weak and exhausted to rise. It was with some difficulty that he quieted the lad, and he endeavored to appear, for his sake, better than he really was. He felt that his strength was failing day by day, and that there was less and less probability of his living until the spring.

In the midst of these cares and fears came

the first of January, "New-Year's Day." Jacques's grandfather exerted himself to cheer the lad; amusing him with games, and striving in many other ways to make him forget the impending trouble. He tried to make it a festive day for the poor boy, and suggested that they should indulge more than ordinarily in such good cheer as lay within their reach. The cheese which Jacques had made must be cut, potatoes also, roasted in the ashes, were to be added to the feast, together with a small quantity of their wine. Nor was Blanchette forgotten: she had a double ration of salt, and Jacques selected the sweetest hay for her holiday dinner, and a fresh, clean bed of straw, making her glad with a triple allowance of caresses; and so passed the day, which had threatened nothing but sorrow, quite happily for our poor prisoners.

But not many more such days were they

to pass ; and the old man felt that the boy's fears must be again aroused, and that what he wished yet to attend to must be done without delay. The following day his grandfather told Jacques to bring to his bedside pen and paper, and write down a few words which he would dictate. The words were as follows :

“ In the name of God, Amen !

“ It is more than probable that I may be taken from my friends before I can state to them my wishes. I have no special directions to give regarding my trifling property. But I wish to give to my dear grandson, Jacques Lopraz, here present, some proof of my love and gratitude for all his care and devotion ; and therefore I beg my heirs that they give to him (should it not be in my power) my watch ; my rifle ; my Bible, which belonged to my father ; and my seal, upon which my initials are engraved.

"These slight tokens of my love will be valuable to him for the sake of the true love which we bear for each other, and which death itself cannot weaken.

"Such is my will.

"Signed at the Chalet of Azindes, the
2d of January, 18—.

"LOUIS LOPRAZ."

Jacques wept as he wrote, and at the close fell sobbing at the side of the old man.

"Be calm, my dear child, be calm," whispered he in gentle tones. "What our God sends must be borne without murmuring, in quiet submission. If I am separated from you, my love will remain the same."

Jacques endeavored to repress his grief, and in some degree recovered his composure. For several days longer the old man lived, comforting the poor lad with his presence, until he hoped with all the confidence of youth that the evil day would not come, that

his grandfather would recover, and regain his lost strength. The kind God would not cause him such grief and pain. He, in his infinite love and compassion, would suffer him to live until spring — would let him look once more upon the dear home in the valley.

With such hopes the boy sustained himself, and buoyed up his sinking heart, while he prayed fervently that God, for the dear Saviour's sake, might fulfil his ardent desires.

The days passed away slowly: it had now been a long time since any noise from without had penetrated their seclusion: their chalet appeared to be completely buried under the snow that had fallen lately in great quantities. The iron pipe which Jacques had placed in the chimney still answered the purpose, and was the sole link that connected them with the outer world — a few flakes of snow occasionally falling through

it into their chalet. These white messengers of winter were the only indications of life that reached the captives in their dark grave.

Should the clock have stopped, they would not have known had it been morning, mid-day, or evening. It was solely by means of the faint glimmer of light which they saw from the top of the small iron pipe that they could distinguish day from night. On the other hand, they suffered very little from cold in their silent cave; and were able daily to renew the fresh air without risking their safety. Jacques thought if only his grandfather's life was spared, and their provisions held out, all might yet be well.

But God, in his inscrutable wisdom, did not so will it, and days of heavy trial awaited the poor lad in the future.

It was now the 3d of January: the day had almost passed away, and although the old man had but little appetite, he had not

complained of pain, remaining calm and comparatively cheerful until evening. After supper, as he sat by the chimney corner to talk, as was his wont, to the lad, he suddenly turned pale as death, trembled, sank down, and would have fallen, had not Jacques quickly ran to his assistance.

The startled boy shrieked aloud, and with a strength far beyond his years, bore him to his bed, and laid him gently down. His head and feet were cold. The blood appeared to have rushed to the heart. Jacques rubbed his hands and feet, and after a time the blood began to circulate, and consciousness returned.

"Where am I?" he asked, opening his eyes. "On my bed?"

"Yes, grandfather," replied the boy. "You fainted, and I carried you here."

"You carried me here!" said the old man, in astonishment. "God be thanked, that,

as I grow weaker, you, my child, grow stronger."

Jacques poured out a little wine, and insisted upon his grandfather drinking it, after which the old man felt somewhat refreshed. Soon after, he fell into a quiet sleep, while the boy kneeled beside his bed, and watched for a long time his slumber: then lying down, quiet sleep soon closed the weary eyelids of the poor child, and the night passed peacefully away.

The following day and night brought no change. Upon the next morning the grandfather was unusually quiet. After some hours spent in deep thought, he called Jacques to him, and speaking unreservedly about the state of his health, he prayed him to await his death with composure and Christian resignation.

"Come here, my child," the old man said, "and sit by my side. I can no longer con-

ceal from you that the close of my life is not very far off, and that my poor frail body will turn to dust before the hour of your rescue comes. My weakness increases so rapidly as to leave me no room for hope. I trust, and doubt not, that you will be more troubled at our separation than alarmed at your loneliness. But I have confidence in your faith in God, your strength of mind, and your love for your father, to whose arms, I feel assured, Providence will restore you. After my death, my child, you will have fewer hardships to contend with. I have been only a burden to you. And should the time come when you can leave the chalet, I will be no longer an obstacle in your way. But do not run any risk ; wait patiently. A few days earlier or later will make but little difference after so long an imprisonment, and by not awaiting the right time, you may risk all. Reflect a moment, my son ; your health has not suf-

fered much. The monotony and loneliness will, perhaps, be oppressive. I know you will miss my companionship; but you must think how many prisoners are condemned to months, yes, long years of silence, who have not as you, my child, the consciousness that they suffer innocently. Pray for patient endurance, Jacques. Only one thought troubles me. I fear the effect of my death upon your nerves. When you look upon my poor body deprived of life, horror and fear, as well as grief and sorrow, will, perhaps, take hold upon your spirit. This feeling you must at once struggle to overcome. Pray earnestly against it, and it will pass away.

“And why should you fear the remains of one so dear? Let us reason about it, Jacques. Do you fear me when I sleep? were you afraid of me the other day when I fainted? why, then, feel alarm when death

comes? You know your dear old friend would never harm you!

“When I am dead, Jacques, give my body to the earth. There, in the dairy, which we now never enter, dig a grave deep enough to receive it, and there lay it down, and let it rest until the spring opens and you return to the valley. Your father will then provide a coffin, and lay me in the pleasant churchyard of our village, where my father and grandfather rest in the soft slumber of death.

“After the fulfilment of all these sorrowful duties, you will, without doubt, feel very lonely in the little chalet. You will shed many a tear; you will call, but I will not hear your voice. But, Jacques, my child, be not overcome with grief; rouse yourself from depression; struggle against it. Turn your thoughts to God — the omnipresent God. Put your trust and confidence in Him; He will be your refuge, your defence, and

strength. The Lord will be thy shepherd. 'If thou look to thyself, thou shalt be able of thyself to accomplish nothing: but if thou trust in the Lord, strength shall be given thee from heaven. Drink of the Lord's cup with submission.' Promise me, my son, that you will do this."

The poor boy tearfully listened to these words, but the pressure of his hand assured his grandfather that he would strive to follow his instructions.

Some days passed away in alternations of hope and fear. The darkness appeared to oppress the old man, although he would not suffer the lamp to be burned during the day. Jacques contrived, however, a mode of economizing the oil. He made a night-light by pouring a little oil upon water, and placing upon its surface a piece of cork, through which a small wick was inserted. This substitute furnished for them a light, and at the

same time consumed but little oil. It cheered his grandfather, and was a source of comfort to the boy.

Upon the 9th of January, that which the boy had long dreaded came upon him. His grandfather, the dear companion of his trials, was, by God's will, taken from him.

How he bore this sorrow, as the thought of his utter loneliness pressed upon him, we can best see from extracts copied from his diary.

"January 10th. — My God, it is thy will. I am alone with Thee; far away from all the rest of the world! Yesterday it happened. . . . It is impossible for me to write down yet the full account of his death. My heart bleeds with anguish, and my paper is wet with my tears.

"January 12th. — Yes, this is the 12th. Two days have elapsed since I wrote the preceding lines. My reason has returned,

and God of his mercy grant that it may not again give way. Oh ! if I knew not that the Lord was with me, around and about me, I would die of grief and terror.

“ *January 15th.* — On the evening of the 8th I was full of hope, for my grandfather seemed better than usual, but scarcely had I lain down beside him when I heard him sigh heavily. I sprang up, and, without delay, dressed myself, and lighted the lamp, asking him if he felt worse.

“ ‘I feel faint,’ he replied; ‘as I did some days ago; or it may be . . .’ Here he paused.

“ ‘Will you take a little wine, dear grandfather,’ I asked.

“ ‘No, my child,’ he answered. ‘Bathe my hands and temples with vinegar . . and then . . . get the “Imitation of Christ,” and find the passage I marked with reference to this hour.’

“I obeyed; and when I had bathed his dear hands and temples, I threw myself down upon my knees, and read, with trembling voice, ‘Thine, O Lord, are all things that are in heaven and that are in earth. I offer up unto Thee all whatsoever is good in me, although it be very small and imperfect, that Thou mayest amend and sanctify it. Make it grateful and acceptable unto Thee, and bring me also, who am a slothful and unprofitable creature, to a good and blessed end. . . .’

“Interrupting me, he took my hands in his and prayed: ‘O Lord, my God, forgive me that I think not in this awful moment alone upon the salvation of my soul, but also upon this poor boy. Thou callest me to Thyself, and *he* will be alone. I tremble at the thought of his bitter sorrow and trial. I tremble lest his confidence in Thee should give way. O Lord, strengthen and comfort him; enable

him to resign himself calmly to Thy will, and, whatever comes upon him, to endure it, for the glory of Jesus Christ: for after winter followeth summer; after night the day returneth, and after a tempest a great calm. O Lord, grant that he may be restored to his friends. I gladly submit to Thy will, and doubt not that this trial, bitter though it be, will work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I implore Thee, dear Lord, for the salvation of his precious soul. Grant that he may be Thy child, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.'

"These were the words, as nearly as I can remember, of my poor grandfather. He spoke slowly, and in a feeble voice. At times he repeated sentences from the Bible, particularly words of our Saviour, with such fervor and Christian resignation as almost to break my heart. A circumstance, trifling in itself, moved me greatly. Blanchette,

awakened by the unaccustomed light, set up a plaintive bleat.

“‘Poor Blanchette!’ said the old man, ‘I must caress her once more; let her loose, my child, and lead her to my bed.’

“I did as he wished, and Blanchette, confiding and tame as she was, put her two fore feet on the edge of the bed, and begged for something to eat. I thought it would please my grandfather, so I laid a little salt in his hand, and Blanchette licked it up with delight.

“‘Give plenty of milk, you dear, faithful creature,’ said the old man, while he continued to stroke her caressingly. Then he turned aside his head, and I led Blanchette to her manger.

“After that he spoke but little. He whispered that I should remain at his side, with his hand in mine. I said a few affectionate words, and they appeared to give him

pleasure; I therefore leaned down, and said, with all the composure I could: 'Farewell, grandfather! farewell—until we meet in heaven. I will not forget your injunctions, but will strive to follow them. "I believe in God the Father; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." Do not be troubled about me, grandfather: God will be my support; I will lean upon his strong arm!'

"Here my poor grandfather pressed my hand, and made an effort to answer, but he could only express his joy by a sigh.

"'I will remember all the advice you gave me,' I continued, 'and neglect nothing that will tend to preserve my life, or help to deliver me from this imprisonment. Farewell, dear grandfather! In heaven you will see my dear mother, perhaps my father; tell them both I will strive to meet you all there. Farewell! farewell!'

"I felt a tremor, a gentle tremor, as I held

his hand, it was the last: his dear, cold hand fell from mine. 'God . . with thee, . . my child,' he whispered — and he died, without pain, without one struggle, without one groan.

"My most painful moments were not those first experienced. When I recovered from the stupor which his death produced, and found myself in my sad dwelling, alone with the dead body, I involuntarily shuddered, for night with her mysterious shadow had come.

"The next morning I had so far regained composure as to wind up the clock and milk Blanchette; the cold too, reminded me that I must make the fire; then I sank into dark, gloomy thought, that lasted until evening, when a storm arose, and the wailing and roaring of its angry blasts aroused me from my stupor.

"I was sitting in the chimney corner by

the feeble glimmer of the night-light, with my back turned toward the bed. I felt a sort of horror gradually creeping over me; I could no longer collect my thoughts; chill after chill ran through my frame; and I would perhaps have lost my reason through my mental anguish and terror, if God had not brought to my remembrance the words of my grandfather. I rose up and approached the bed: I looked upon his poor body; I laid my hand upon it—it was a painful moment; I repeated my look, my touch, and I felt my terror gradually subside.

“Since that time, I have returned at intervals to the remains of the dear old man, and fulfilled for him, tranquilly and calmly, all those little services which the occasion required. His expression was so sweet and peaceful, that my tears broke forth afresh.

“‘No,’ sobbed I to myself, ‘the earthly re-

mains of my beloved grandfather shall cause me no further alarm.'

"Notwithstanding, my fear, in some degree, returned as I prepared for sleep. At last I laid myself down by Blanchette, nestling close to her side. The warmth and her regular breathing gradually composed me, and I fell into a sound sleep. Wakening before morning, I found the light had gone out: again my heart beat with terror. Foolish child that I was! What security was this weak flame? could it protect me, and guard me from evil? one breath could extinguish it; why did I let my calmness and self-control rest upon it? Praying to God that he would give me that peace he has promised to all that call upon him in spirit and in truth, my agitated nerves were soothed, and I slept—slept peacefully.

"The following morning, after I had milked the goat, and finished the usual work,

I calmly approached the body, and even held the dear, venerable head for several minutes. My fear vanished, but my sorrow increased. This change, however, was more natural and reasonable.

“My thoughts were directed to the burial, and I tried to recall to my memory what my grandfather had said about it. The rest of the day I passed in sorrowful meditation, and another night I laid down beside Blanche, and slept soundly.

“The next morning I tried to write in my diary, but I was obliged to give it up until to-day, when my spirit is somewhat more peaceful and composed. My agitation and fear were gradually allayed until I felt only sorrow and grief.

“How many tears I have poured out over your poor body, my dear old companion! I cannot bear to think of the interment. But the words of holy Scripture reprove and

comfort me: 'Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.'

"Taking my tools, I opened the door of the dairy. 'Diverse callings have you to fulfil,' said I to myself, as I stepped over the threshold. 'First nurse, then doctor, and now grave-digger.'

"The first strokes caused me such pain that I was obliged to cease. Not that my arms refused their service, but my spirit was faint and troubled. Anguish took hold upon me. At every blow a hollow noise reverberated, for the dairy was vaulted like a cellar. I was obliged to accustom myself to this sound, and the whole day was consumed in a work which, at other times, would scarcely have occupied me two hours. Indeed, the ground was so light and sandy that I was able to throw it out with the shovel. I made the grave very deep, for I thought, should I leave the chalet, whether to escape from its

imprisonment, or to die, in either case I must, as far as lay in me, secure his dear remains from ravenous beasts. I proceeded with my work until the grave was so deep that it reached over my head.

“The clock struck ten: the night had come, and with it dark gloomy thoughts. I had not courage to proceed with the interment, although I knew that I dared not delay much longer; so, cowering down near Blanchette, I put off the sorrowful duty until the following morning.

“Strengthening myself for the painful work which lay before me, I partook of some of the bread and wine instead of my usual breakfast. Everything had been prepared the day before. Laying the body of my poor grandfather upon a plank, and binding it on with care, I cast one tender, sorrowful look upon the dear remains. The poor head inclined to one side, the hands were folded

peacefully over the breast. My heart almost burst with grief, and I wept then my bitterest tears.

“‘Grandfather!’ cried I, ‘you have left me all alone! you no longer hear me when I speak. Forever, ah! eternally are your white lips sealed.’

“I was obliged to wait some time before I was able to proceed with my work. But it must be done. Why delay it longer?

“The body was soon beside the grave. Gently and reverently as possible I suffered it to glide down, and, seating myself near, I gave way freely to my grief. It was a long time before I could resolve to cast the first shovelful of earth into the grave. At last, seeking strength in prayer, and imploring, from a full heart, my Heavenly Father for comfort, and entire submission to his will, I rose, and covered a large linen cloth over the dear face. Soon was the sorrowful work

ended. I spent the rest of the day in carving a short inscription with my knife upon a board:

“ ‘ Here rest the mortal remains of PIERRE LOUIS LOPRAZ, who died in the night of the 8th – 9th of January, in the arms of his grandson, Jacques Lopraz, who buried him with his own hands.’

“ I nailed the board to a stake, and planted it upon the mound, after which I closed the door, and returned to the kitchen, where I now had no companion but my poor Blanche.

“ Although I felt more composed, now that the body lay no longer upon the bed, I felt that I had not yet wholly overcome my weakness. I resolved to make daily visits to the dairy, and always without a light, praying morning or evening beside the grave. For two days I have done so, and my composure is gradually returning. But the sad

thought that I am now alone, all, all alone, I cannot drive away. It pursues me all the day long."

In this manner did the poor lad describe his sufferings, and utter loneliness. He sank now into the deepest despondency. For days he sat beside the hearth, gazing into vacancy, and scarce conscious of one clear thought.

Only two events are noted in his diary which for some time roused him from his stupor of despair.

The first occurred soon after the interment of his grandfather. A slight noise in the room having attracted his attention one evening, as he was about to extinguish his lamp and the fire upon the hearth, and turning to see what produced it, he found a piece of lime, covered with soot, had fallen down. It was still glowing. Experiencing some anxiety, he looked up the chimney, but found his fears were groundless. As he still gazed,

a bright star glided slowly past the iron pipe. It lasted but a moment, yet it shed a bright gleam of hope and comfort into the bowed heart of the poor lad. It seemed like a messenger from heaven sent to cheer and illumine his dark grave — an indication that he was not forgotten by his God. Sinking down upon his knees, he thanked the Lord, with tears of gratitude, for this beam of his eternal love.

But soon his hopelessness returned. The deathlike monotony seemed more than he could bear, and an incurable melancholy had, perhaps, settled upon him, had not a new source of disquietude aroused him from his grief.

Jacques for some days past had observed that the weather had become milder. He required much less fire than usual, and the smoke did not escape as readily through the pipe. Toward two o'clock in the after-

noon, as he sat beside the fire, he suddenly heard a hollow, rumbling noise, like the rolling of distant thunder. It approached nearer, and yet nearer, increasing with fearful power. Suddenly the chalet shook to its very foundations. Jacques sprang up in affright.

The different utensils and tools fell in confusion around him — a thick, stifling dust filled the air, and from the straining and creaking of the rafters, the boy knew the little chalet had suffered some violent shock.

At first, he feared the walls would be thrown down, but soon he was convinced that the kitchen, at least, stood firm. In order to assure himself that all was right, he lighted the lamp, and proceeded to investigate. When he entered the stable, a scene of destruction met his gaze. A mass of ruins covered the ground; the roof was torn off, and lime, shingles, and fragments of beams lay strewn around. Evidently some enor-

mous mass had fallen against the chalet. The boy knew not whether it was a rock that had been torn from the mountain, or an avalanche precipitated from some high point.

Jacques thanked God, and took courage. His remarkable preservation convinced him that his Heavenly Father's eye still rested upon him.

But a new misfortune threatened him. The goat, as his grandfather had feared, began gradually to yield a smaller quantity of milk. Jacques first observed it about the middle of January, and by the 25th of the month the fact could no longer be doubted. He recalled the words of his grandfather, who one day had said, while they were discussing the probabilities of such a case: "What should we do, Jacques, if Blanchette were to go dry? It would, I fear, be absolutely necessary for us to kill the poor creature for our own preservation."

But the boy could not bear to think of putting to death the faithful companion of his solitude. He resolved to delay this as long as possible. Then, too, Blanchette still gave some milk, sufficient for his immediate wants. To be sure, he could no longer make cheese, but he still had some in store, and possibly the yield of milk might increase. After a strict examination of his resources, he calculated that they would last him at farthest about fifteen or sixteen days.

Jacques now came to the conclusion to give Blanchette a double allowance of salt: her milk increased, for two or three days, but again decreased, until it was scarcely worth while milking her for the little she gave.

By the 8th of February he tried for the last time to milk the goat, but was obliged to give up the vain task. Seating himself upon the ground beside the poor creature,

he threw his arms around her and wept bitterly. The hour had come: he must kill his faithful nurse, the sole living creature that sweetened his solitude. How was it possible for him to put a knife to her throat, after all the benefits he had received from her!

He could not decide upon the painful yet necessary deed; he still postponed its execution; he had a little food left, and he would economize it as strictly as possible.

Upon the 12th of February he observed in his diary, "It is impossible for me, in the midst of so much sorrow and anguish of mind, to write with any degree of regularity. My provisions are almost exhausted; Blanche grows daily fatter, and yet . . . I cannot force myself to the horrible deed.

"*February 13th.*—I have searched the chalet again, even digging up the ground in several places, hoping to find some hidden store—

in vain : the exertion has only increased my hunger. What will become of us? O God, help us!

“*February 17th.*—The cold has become, since yesterday evening, so intense that I am obliged to keep a constant fire. This would be good weather to preserve poor Blanchette’s flesh: it would freeze hard, and would be more likely to keep. But the weather may change; should that happen, I would not have sufficient salt for my purpose.

“*February 18th.*—The cold increases: it reminds me of the attack of the wolves. There is nothing to hinder them now from roving about the mountain. May God protect me from them! To be torn in pieces! what a frightful fate! far rather would I be crushed by an avalanche; such a death would be sweet compared to the other.

“*February 20th.*—I have concluded how to

act. I will leave the chalet to-morrow; and in case a misfortune befall me, I will record in my diary what has led me to this determination. Yesterday Blanchette's bleating awakened me from a frightful dream. I thought I was standing, with hands covered with blood, hacking her flesh to pieces, while the poor animal uttered cries of pain, looking at the same time sorrowfully upon me. When I awoke I found my cheeks wet with tears. With joy I saw that Blanchette still lived. I ran to her and caressed her tenderly—but my joy did not last long. What would I gain by the delay? in two days my food would be gone. I must come to a decision. I took my knife—I drew near to give the fatal blow, but I could not. It seemed to me as if I were about to commit murder. The knife fell from my hand, and, throwing my arms around her, I hugged her again and again.

“The cold was severe, and after lighting a fire, while I warmed myself, the thought suddenly occurred to me, ‘If the wolves can travel over the snow, why can you not do the same?’

“The very idea filled me with joy. But soon fear took possession of me. In order not to sacrifice Blanchette, I was about to expose myself to the ravenous wolves.

“Should I kill the goat, how do I know if her flesh would prove sufficient to support me until deliverance came? Sometimes the Jura is covered with snow, even after summer has set in, and such an opportunity as this may not again present itself. Besides, an attack by the wolves is doubtful; and then we can descend the mountain in a sledge very rapidly. A *sledge*! that word turned the scale.

“I sprang up immediately, and commenced preparations for our departure. I picked out

the best wood I could find. In a short time I had constructed a sledge firm and large enough to carry myself and Blanchette. Then, too, I understand how to steer it. I will bind Blanchette's feet together, and fasten her on behind me, and then I will venture, and, with the help of God, hope to reach the plain.

“And now my excitement was intense; I felt myself agitated by a variety of feelings. I cannot, without emotion, gaze upon the little chalet where I have suffered so much, and where the ashes of my dear grandfather repose. I think with terror upon the distance which lies between this height and the valley. But I will not shrink from my resolve. If thou only, O my God, wilt be my shield, I will fear nothing.”

He awoke early upon the morning of the 21st of February; the cold appeared to be more severe than ever; but that favored his

undertaking: not a moment must be lost. First, he must dig a passage through the snow; but he could throw back the snow, now, into the chalet: this lightened his labor not a little. He set to work, and exerted himself with such zeal that at last he felt tired, and was obliged to rest: entering the chalet, he made a fire.

But scarcely had the smoke risen in the chimney, when he heard a noise from without. His first thought was that the wolves had come again, and that they would now surely tear him in pieces. His fright did not last long: instead of the howling of the wolves, he heard distinctly human voices; yes, he even heard his own name called. With a shout of rapture he answered; then arose, almost beside himself for joy, and worked with superhuman strength toward his rescuers. Now he distinguished plainer and still plainer the tones, and now—what

rapture! he heard the voice of his father. After long moments, they had forced an opening through the snow. His father was the first to force his way through. One cry of joy, and the lad was folded in his arms.

“And your grandfather?” he cried.

Jacques was too much overcome to answer. He led his father to the dairy, and throwing himself upon the grave, he wept freely. The poor lad tried to give a description of their sufferings and of his grandfather's death, but he was too deeply agitated; the attempt was beyond his strength.

“Not now, my child, not now,” said his father deeply moved; “we must set out at once upon our return.”

Meanwhile the rest of his liberators had pressed through—the two uncles of Jacques, and Pierre the servant; they all embraced the lad with much affection. Preparations were at once made for their departure. The men

had brought with them a couple of extra pairs of snow-shoes : only one pair was needed.

Pierre took care of the sledge, and Blanchette was made fast upon it. The wolves might come if they pleased now, for they were well armed. Jacques's father, laying a rifle upon his shoulder, and taking his son's hand, said :

"This is not the time, my boy, to remove my dear father's mortal remains. In the spring we will return ; then they shall be laid to rest in our village church-yard. But we will kneel beside his grave before we leave."

They all entered the dairy, and kneeled around the lowly mound. After they had prayed, François tearfully whispered : "Farewell, father ; I am only following thy wish in removing this child as quickly as possible. Farewell, father : would that I once more could have seen thee alive."

All eyes were full of tears as they care-

fully closed the door of the little chalet. The descent was rapid but laborious. Jacques, accustomed so long to darkness, was dazzled by the light of the sun and the glare of the snow.

The cold was intense, but the lad bore it uncomplainingly, for to that he and poor Blanchette, who lay trembling upon the sledge, owed their rescue.

They reached the foot of the mountain without further accident than an occasional sinking in the snow, and found a path which the villagers had, with almost incredible labor, prepared.

“We would have rescued you in December, my son,” said his father, “if it had only been cold enough; but the snow was too soft to attempt it. Our neighbors and friends have not been wanting in zeal or sympathy. But, within the memory of man, never have such masses of snow fallen. Four times

did we break the road, and four times was it filled up again."

"Was it impossible from the very first day?" inquired the lad.

"Not from the first day," said his father; "but an unfortunate accident delayed your rescue."

And now his father related to him the particulars of his descent from the mountain. His life was nearly lost by the sliding of a mass of snow. They had discovered him lying unconscious upon the brink of an abyss. A few steps farther they found the alpenstock of the old man, and the conclusion was reached that they had perished in the storm. For three days he lay in extreme danger; and when at last reason returned, the snow had increased to such a fearful depth, that the deliverance of the poor imprisoned pair in the chalet could no longer be thought of.

Jacques was welcomed with the greatest enthusiasm by the villagers, and the lad blushed as he recalled how often he had in his loneliness doubted their sympathy.

Every one wanted to see the lad and faithful Blanchette. They overwhelmed them with caresses. Blanchette was served with the daintiest food, and stroked and fondled without measure. Certainly, she was the happiest of all the goats in the village.

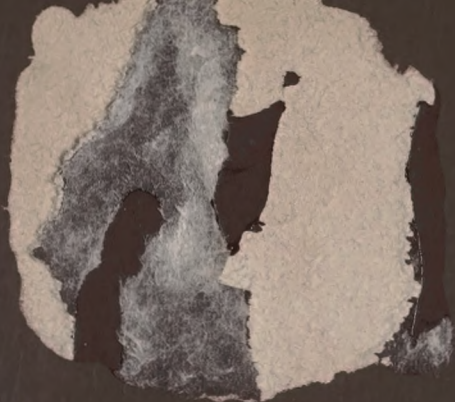
"The dear God has saved my life. To Him be praise and thanks and glory," wrote Jacques in his journal, on the day after his rescue. "It was His holy will that my dear grandfather should not see his family again. But this faithful teacher taught me to say in the lonely chalet, 'Thy will be done,' and I will not murmur. God will not be angry if I grieve for him. Did not the blessed Saviour weep at the grave of his friend?

"And now, O my God, grant that I may

never forget the instructions of my dear, beloved grandfather ; but that I may follow his example, walking ever firmly and steadfastly in his most holy faith, so that I may meet him in heaven, if I should be so blessed as to be received into Thy glorious kingdom. Amen !”

“ Trust ye in the Lord forever : for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.”





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